

CAMELIA BEJAN

ENGLISH WORDS: STRUCTURE, ORIGIN AND MEANING

Affixation
Compounding
Clipping
Borrowing
Neologism
Collocation
Idiom
Synonymy
Antonymy
Homonymy
Polysemy
Lexical field



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English words: structure, origin and meaning **A linguistic introduction**

Acquiring knowledge about the words of a language involves understanding how words are created, how they have evolved over time, how they relate in meaning to each other, and how they are dealt with in dictionaries. These are the main goals that this textbook, designed for undergraduate students of English as a foreign language, aims to accomplish. Drawing on insights from the linguistic research that has been carried out lately, it covers those areas of language study, which normally fall under the headings of lexical morphology, etymology and lexical semantics. Special attention is paid to word-building processes, word history and word meaning, with a view to clarifying terminology and putting it to practice in the empirical analysis of language facts.

Camelia Bejan
Associate Professor of Linguistics, Ovidius University, Romania

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List of abbreviations

Languages

AmE	American English
AusE	Australian English
BrE	British English
NZE	New Zealand English
Gmc	Germanic languages
L	Latin
OE	Old English
ME	Middle English
ModE	Modern English

Lexical categories

A	adjective
Adv	adverb
N	noun
Num	numeral
P	preposition
V	verb

Syntactic phrases

NP	noun phrase
VP	verb phrase
AP	adjective phrase
AdvP	adverb phrase
PP	preposition phrase

Other notational conventions

//	slashes identify spoken sounds using the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet
[]	square brackets identify components in the structure of the word or syntactic phrases
>	yields or produces
*	an asterisk indicates an ungrammatical example
§	section in a chapter

Foreword

The areas of language study covered in this book are those which conventionally fall under the headings of lexical morphology, etymology and lexical semantics. Special attention is paid to three main topics related to the study of words: word-building processes, word history and word meaning.

This textbook is based on a survey of the main descriptive linguistic research that has been done over the past 40 years or so. It is not written in the perspective of a particular theoretical framework, but draws on insights from various research traditions, with a view to clarifying terminology and putting it to practice in the empirical analysis of language facts. We rely both on introductory sources, such as introductions to linguistics, textbooks, linguistic encyclopaedias and dictionaries of linguistic terms, as well as, on more advanced studies, such as handbooks, monographs and articles. The book is structured as follows.

The first chapter covers both major and minor word-formation processes in English. It gives an overview of affixational and compounding patterns, as well as an insight into the more peripheral word-formation types, such as: clipping, blending, conversion, back-derivation, change of stress, and so on.

The second chapter deals with the main issues related to the origins of words, the wide range of lexical borrowings into the English language, as well as the creation of short-lived, trendy neologisms, all viewed as essential stages in the moulding of the English word-stock. The diachronic view on the vocabulary of the language provides answers to questions related to the etymological diversity of the present-day English lexicon.

The third chapter is concerned with different approaches to the analysis of word meaning and with the semantic relations which a lexical item contracts with other lexical items. Priority is given to the syntagmatic sense relationships established in collocational patterns and in idiomatic expressions. The focus is then on the multifaceted paradigmatic sense relationships of hyponymy, synonymy, antonymy, homonymy, polysemy, etc. Finally, we take a brief look at dictionaries, as the ultimate word-books that supply the readership with essential information concerning word meaning and usage.

Using this book

Conceived for undergraduates of English as a Foreign Language, the textbook assumes an upper-intermediate level of English and little prior knowledge of linguistics and covers a wide range of lexicological topics, mainly approached from a traditional, descriptive standpoint, with frequent reference to modern techniques used to explore the lexicon of English, such as online dictionaries and language corpora.

The material is organized in three chapters, with clearly delimited sections that are interspersed with exercises, grouped in self-assessed tests. Some introductory material is covered in each section, to give students the theoretical tools they will need to analyse the English vocabulary. Some of the exercises require dictionary consultation or online searching. Students can control their learning success by comparing their results with the answer key provided at the end of the book. Each section ends with recommendations for further reading that steer the students' attention to the main bibliographical sources for the linguistic topic under discussion. The main linguistic terms, when first defined and discussed, are set in boldface type, and are included in a glossary, at the end of the book, that is meant to help students refresh memory whenever they need. The bibliography is geared to the annotated suggestions for Further reading.

The book can be used as a textbook for a course on word-formation, origin and meaning, as a source-book for teachers, for student research projects, as a book for self-study by more advanced students (e.g. for their exam preparation), and as an up-to-date reference concerning selected lexicological topics in English for a more general readership.

The main teaching goals that it aims to achieve are to increase the undergraduate students' awareness of the structure and meaning of the lexical items belonging to the wordstock of the English language and to develop their language skills. Later on, as professionals, they will benefit from the knowledge and skills acquired – for instance, by being able to draw information from a wide range of general or specialised dictionaries and all available corpora of the English language – in their attempts to cope with the professional demands of teaching English as a foreign language, interpreting or translating.

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1. Word-formation

The definition of the word

The average speaker of a language knows from 45,000 to 60,000 words which are stored in his/her memory in the so-called mental lexicon, i.e. the lexicon in the human mind. But what exactly is a word? How can a word be defined?

In everyday language, the term 'word' is used intuitively for a basic element of language. From a linguistic perspective, the word is characterised by different traits depending on the theoretical background. Thus, the word can be defined on the phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic level:

(a) on the phonetic-phonological level:

words are the smallest segments of sound (a speech sound or a series of speech sounds) which have the function of **phonemes**. For example, the word *cat* consists of three phonemes /kæt/. Words usually have one main stress, marked by an acute accent: *téxtbook*, *análysis*, *understánd*. Words can be theoretically isolated by word accent and boundary markers like pauses.

(b) on the orthographic-graphemic level:

words are uninterrupted string of letters, preceded by a blank space and followed either by a blank space or by a punctuation mark in writing or print, for example, there are five words and three punctuation marks in the following: *His sister, Jane, arrived late.*

The term 'word,' in these senses, is often referred to as the **orthographic word** (for writing) or the **phonological word** (for speech). A neutral term often used to subsume both is **word form**.

(c) on the morphological level:

words are characterised as basic linguistic units consisting of **morphemes**. Words have morphological structure; they are made up of a base with various derivational and/or inflectional elements. For instance, the word *players* consists of three morphemes PLAY + -ER + -S. Words can be described as the result of applying specific rules of **word-formation** (e.g.

derivation, compounding, conversion). They are structurally stable and cannot be divided (e.g. *greenhouse* is form-preserving, no item can be inserted in its structure). Words belong to certain classes (noun, verb, adjective, determiner, etc.) which are called **parts of speech** or **word classes**.

(d) on the lexical-semantic level:

words are the smallest, relatively independent carriers of meaning that are codified in the **lexicon**. The word expresses a **semantic concept**, for instance *a boy* is 'a young male human,' *a house* is 'a building.' The technical term used to indicate the smallest unit of meaning is lexeme. **The lexeme** (also **lexical item**) is an item of the vocabulary and, as such, would be listed in a dictionary. A language's inventory of lexemes forms the **lexicon** of that language.

(e) on the syntactic level:

words are the smallest permutable and substitutable units of a sentence. Words are considered to be 'syntactic atoms,' i.e. the smallest elements of the sentence. Words occur in certain positions in the sentence, which are determined by the syntactic rules of the language. For example, *the* is a determiner, and it can only occur in noun phrases [_{NP} *the man*], [_{NP} *the old man*]; *ashamed* is an adjective and it can only appear in predicative position, never in attributive position (*The boy is ashamed. *an ashamed boy*).

According to Lyons (1981: ch. 2), the main criteria to define a word are: phonological and semantic identity, morphological structure and syntactic mobility.

The study of words is the target of more than one field of linguistic endeavour. The branch of linguistics that studies words, their meanings and relations (lexical fields), and changes in their form and meaning through time is known as **Word study** in American English or as **Lexicology** in British English. The lexicological study draws on research from other linguistic disciplines:

- **Lexical morphology** that studies the internal structure of words and word-building processes;
- **Lexical semantics** that examines word meaning and fixed word combinations (phraseology);
- **Lexicography** that deals with the writing or compilation of lexicons or dictionaries.

Lexicologists may specialize either in the synchronic or in the diachronic study of language, however, priority is given to the synchronic description. In lexical morphology and lexical semantics the synchronic approach is used, while in etymological research the diachronic approach prevails.

Further reading

Useful discussions of the notion of word can be found in introductions to the basics of morphological analysis, as well as in textbooks, such as the more elementary Bauer (1983), Katamba (1993), Plag (2003) and the more advanced Matthews (1991), and Carstairs-McCarthy (1992).

The aims of the study of word-formation

Word-formation investigates and describes the processes involved in building new complex words on the basis of already existing linguistic resources. It looks at the structure of the vocabulary from a historical-genetic or synchronic-functional aspect. Its main tasks are:

- a. classification of the elements of word-formation, such as simple or complex words, base morphemes, derivational elements (affix, prefix, suffix);
- b. description of the principles according to which the formations can be ordered structurally;
- c. description of the semantic aspects of the processes involved in word-formation.

Word-formation deals with the description of the structure of both nonce words and neologisms (occasional vs usual word-formation), as well as of set words (usual form, lexicalization). These must be viewed as two sides of the same phenomenon, for new words can arise only according to the already existing prototypes in the lexicalized vocabulary of the language.

The main word-formation processes in English are:

- derivation (the creation of new words through prefixes or suffixes attached to a free morpheme (*mis-* + *understand*, *read* + *-er*, *un-* + *read* + *-able*))
- composition (compounds of several free morphemes: *fire* + *man*, *bath* + *room*), and
- conversion (the change of word class of a stem: *camp* (noun) > *camp* (verb)).

Clippings, abbreviations, and blends are seen as peripheral processes of word-formation, in which different patterns of shortening of existing words are concerned. A key term in the analysis of word structure is ‘the morpheme.’

The morpheme

From the point of view of their structure, words appear to be divisible into smaller units, called **morphemes**. The morpheme is generally defined as the smallest indivisible component of the word having a meaning of its own. For example:

<i>true</i>	is a single morpheme
<i>untrue</i>	contains two morphemes: UN-+TRUE
<i>untruthfulness</i>	contains 5 morphemes: UN-+TRUE+-TH+-FUL+-NESS

Morphemes are the meaningful elements of a word. They cannot be equated with syllables. Morphemes can be related to a particular meaning or grammatical function (e.g. plural or past tense), while syllables are chunks into which words can be divided for the purposes of pronunciation.

On the one hand, a single morpheme can have more than one syllable. For instance, the disyllabic *river*, *harvest*, the trisyllabic *gorilla*, or the quadrisyllabic *asparagus* realise just a single morpheme. On the other hand, there are sometimes two or more morphemes in a single syllable, as in:

<i>kissed</i>	KISS + ‘PAST TENSE’
<i>sings</i>	SING + ‘PRESENT TENSE’ + ‘SINGULAR’
<i>cats</i>	CAT + ‘PLURAL’
<i>men’s</i>	MAN + ‘PLURAL’ + ‘POSSESSIVE.’

This is the representation of a morphosyntactic word as a base plus the relevant grammatical categories or morphosyntactic categories (e.g. number, case, gender in nouns; tense, aspect, mood, number, person in verbs)

Some morphemes like *boy*, *orange*, *cat* can stand alone, as separate words, and are therefore called **free morphemes**. Words consisting of single free morphemes are called **simple words**. Other morphemes cannot occur as words: UN-, -NESS, -ER, -S, -ED, -ING, etc. Such morphemes that function only as parts of other words are known as **bound morphemes**. Words that are made up of a central meaningful element and bound morphemes are called **morphologically complex words**.

Further reading

For further discussion of the basic concept of ‘morpheme’ consult an introductory text such as Bauer (1990), Matthews (1991). Definitions of morphological terms are also given in Bauer et al (2013: §2.2.).

On the properties of morphemes, see Minkova and Stockwell (2013: 64–76), Katamba (1993: ch.3), among many others.

Self-assessed test 1.

1. Identify the morphemes in the following words and state whether they are free or bound: *learners*, *played*, *books*, *boy’s*, *painful*, *unhappiness*.
2. Give the meaning of the morpheme *-s* in the following examples:

Despair dogs him day after day.

Check out all the dogs available for adoption online.

A video can aid a lot in recognizing a dog’s body language.

Dogs’ eyes are placed on the sides of the head.

When he is very hungry, he wolfs his food.

1.1. Affixation

Morphologically complex words are made up of a main meaningful component (root/base) and bound morphemes (affixes, inflections). Consider, for instance, the morphologically complex word *teachers* and *unhappy*:

<i>teach</i>	+	<i>-er</i>	+	<i>-s</i>
root/base		suffix		inflection

<i>un-</i>	+	<i>happy</i>
prefix		root

The word *teachers* is formed of the basic morpheme *teach* to which two bound morphemes are added: *-er* and *-s*. The morpheme *teach* is the root or the base of the complex word, *-er* is a suffix and *-s* an inflection, while the word *unhappy* consists of a root and a prefix.

Thus, the components of the morphologically complex words can be briefly defined as:

- **root** (also **base**) is the basic morpheme from which a word is derived, the indivisible central part of a word; the irreducible core of a word.

- **affix** (prefix or suffix) is a bound morpheme added to a stem or root in order to build a new word.
- **inflection** is a bound morpheme added to a stem in order to signal grammatical relationships, such as plural, past tense or possession.

1.1.1. The distinction between affixes and inflections

To distinguish between affixes and inflections, let us look at the range of words (lexemes) derived from the base *human*:

root + affixes	word class
<i>human</i>	noun
<i>human-ity</i>	noun
<i>human-ism</i>	noun
<i>human-istic</i>	adjective
<i>human-itarian</i>	adjective
<i>human-itarian-ism</i>	noun
<i>human-ize</i>	verb
<i>human-ly</i>	adverb
<i>non-human</i>	adjective
<i>inhuman</i>	adjective

All these different words are the result of affixation. Affixes produce new lexemes, also called **derived words** or **derivatives**. Since derived words are made up of two or more morphemes, they are **polymorphic**. Affixes change the word class to which the base belongs. They may have not only a final position, but also an initial position, hence the labels: prefix and suffix.

Let us now consider the various forms of the lexemes *human* and *humanize*:

nominal inflections:

<i>humans</i>	-s	to mark plurality
<i>human's</i>	's	to show genitive case

verbal inflections:

<i>humanizes</i>	-(e)s	to mark 3rd person sg., present tense
<i>humanized</i>	-ed	to show past simple
<i>humanizing</i>	-ing	to mark the present participle

It is obvious that inflections encode grammatical categories: nominal categories (number and case) and verbal categories (tense, person). They do

not produce new words, but different forms of the same word. Inflections can only occur at the end of the words, while affixes are attached either on the left or on the right of the base, as prefixes or suffixes respectively (cf. also Plag 2003: 14–17).

In short, affixes produce new lexemes from other lexemes, inflections create word-forms of known lexemes. While affixes are relevant semantically, inflections are relevant syntactically.

Lexeme vs. word form.

For the sake of clarity, it is useful to insist at this point on the distinction between the terms **lexeme** and **word form**. The **lexeme** (also **lexical item**) is an item of the vocabulary. It is the smallest unit in the meaning system of a language. In a dictionary, each lexeme has a separate entry or sub-entry, for instance: *human*. Affixes form new lexemes, like *humanity*, *humanize*, each with a separate dictionary entry. Lexemes constitute the lexicon of the language, a huge complex structure in the minds of the language users.

The **word forms** are all the inflected forms of a word, such as *humanizing*, *humanized*, *humanizes*, that belong to the lexeme *humanize*. Thus, we say that a verb is inflected for tense (*humanized*), a noun is inflected for number (*humans*) or case (*humans' plans*).

Root vs. stem

Another important distinction to be made is that between the terms **root** and **stem**, as elements that operate in the structure of the word.

A root is the base form of a word which cannot be further analysed without total loss of identity. It is that part of the word left when all the affixes are removed. In the word *readership*, for example, removing *-er* and *-ship* leaves the root *read*. From a semantic point of view, the root generally carries the main component of meaning in a word.

On the other hand, a stem is that part of a word to which affixes or inflections are added. Stems may be simple, compound or complex. For instance, *read* is a simple stem to which the suffix *-er* is added to derive the word *reader*; in its turn, *reader* may serve as a complex stem to which the suffix *-ship* can be attached to yield a new word, *readership*.

A simple stem consists solely of a single root morpheme (as in *read*, *boy*), a compound stem is made up of two root morphemes (as in *book reader*, *boyfriend*), and a complex stem comprises a root morpheme plus a derivational affix (as in *readership*, *boyhood*, *boyish*).

Let us now use these terms to analyse the structure of the word-forms *boys* and *readers*:

boy + -s = boys
 root/base
 simple stem + plural inflection

read + -er = reader + -s = readers
 root/base
 simple stem + suffix complex stem + plural inflection

In the word-form *boys*, the plural inflection -s is attached to the simple stem *boy*, which is a bare root, that is, the irreducible core of the word. In the word-form *readers*, the plural inflection is added to a complex stem, *reader*, which consists of a root *read* and the suffix -er, which forms agentive nouns. As can be noticed, a stem may be either identical with the root or derived from a root with the help of a suffix, in which case it is called **complex stem**.

Further reading

On morphology generally, and particularly on inflections, see Bauer (1990). The distinction between inflections and affixes is briefly explained in textbooks introducing students to the field of morphology, such as Aronoff and Fudeman (2011: 2.4). See also Bauer et al's *Reference guide* (2013: ch. 24) on the same topic, and find more advanced reading suggestions in ten Hacken (2014: §2.4.)

For intermediate-level reading on morphological issues cross-linguistically, see also Katamba (1993).

Self-assessed test 1.1.1.

1. Indicate for each base/root whether it takes an affix (prefix/ suffix) or an inflection: *toys, listened, reassessment, girls, 'fatherly, uncover, singing, disarms, sorrowful, oxen, alumni, finest*.
2. In each of the following groups of word forms, identify those that are forms of the same lexeme
 - (a) *sing, singer, singing, sang, sung*
 - (b) *woman, woman's, women, womanly*
 - (c) *perform, performs, performance, performing, performer*
 - (d) *written, wrote, writer, rewrites, writing*
3. Consider the following words: *birds, repayment, speaks, speakers, undecidedly*.
 - a. Identify the lexical category (N, V, A, Adv)

- b. Each word contains more than one morpheme. List all the morphemes and indicate whether they are free or bound.
- c. Indicate for each affix whether it is derivational or inflectional.

1.1.2. Criteria for the classification of affixes

An affix is a bound morpheme that attaches to a base. Affixes can be classified according to their position with regard to the base, into **prefixes**, attached to the left of the base and, **suffixes**, to the right. The data-base for the study of suffixes has traditionally been the reverse dictionary (e.g. *Reverse English dictionary* 1999), while for the study of prefixes any large dictionary (e.g. *Oxford English dictionary*) can provide the relevant information. Affixes can also be grouped according to their function, origin, the part of speech that they form, productivity and meaning.

1.1.2.1. The function of affixes

Affixes that change the class of the word to which they are added are called **governing derivational affixes**:

earth + -en	> earthen	N + suffix > A
legal + -ize	> legalize	A + suffix > V
en- + code	> encode	prefix + N > V
dis- + able	> disable	prefix + A > V

Affixes that do not change the word class, determining only a change of meaning, are known as **restrictive derivational affixes**. They may be prefixes or suffixes:

mis- + fortune	> misfortune	prefix + N > N
self- + confident	> self-confident	
kitchen + -ette	> kitchenette	N + suffix > N
hero + -ism	> heroism	

1.1.2.2. The origin of affixes

Both prefixes and suffixes may be grouped etymologically into: native and non-native.

English is a language that has had a long history of contact with and borrowing from other languages such that the vocabulary and the processes by which words are formed can be classed as **native** (or **Germanic**) and **non-native** (also **Latinate** or **learned**).

The English language is descended from a West Germanic language originally spoken along the North Sea coast in modern Friesland. The Anglo-Saxon invaders brought to England various dialectal versions of this language. With the Viking invasions in the 8th century, another layer of Germanic, but North Germanic, was added to the West Germanic fundamentals. Words and word-formation processes preserved from these Germanic origins are called **native** (see ch. 2). Examples of native affixes are the following:

Prefixes of Germanic origin:

counter-	counterattack, counterfire
for-	forbid, forgive
fore-	forefather, foreman, foresight
mis-	misassociate, misapprehend, misvalue
out-	outgrowth, outpost, outdated
over-	overcharge, overdue, oversimplify
re-	rewrite, review
under-	undereducate, underground, undersecretary
up-	upgrade, uplift, uproot
with-	withdraw, withstand

Suffixes of Germanic origin

Many affixes of Germanic origin such as *-ly*, *-hood*, *-less*, *-dom* were independent words in Old English. They formed compounds with other free morphemes, but later their fusion became so complete that they were turned into (reinterpreted as) suffixes, i.e. bound morphemes:

-dom	freedom, officialdom
-hood	manhood, priesthood
-ly	godly, daily

Other affixes of native origin, like: *-ing*, *-ful*, *-ship*, *-er*, had the status of affixes in Old English, as well. Examples in present-day English are:

-er	hacker, networker
-ful	restful, spiteful
-ing	wedding, winnings
-ish	boyish, womanish
-ness	greatness, selfishness
-ship	authorship, scholarship
-th	growth, width
-ward	backward, skyward
-wise	clockwise, likewise
-y	booky, classy, smoky, sunny

In 1066 England was invaded by the Normans and French became the official language, replacing English for two centuries. Throughout this period a huge number of French words were added to the English vocabulary.

Meanwhile English was still used by the lower classes, and thus it remained free from the influence of French on the grammatical system. Documents prove that in the 14th century English was again the mother tongue of all England. During the Renaissance, a great number of Latin and Greek words were added to the English vocabulary in order to improve it and make it fit for modern usage.

Eventually sufficient words containing particular affixes were borrowed so that a pattern could be perceived in English and new words were coined containing these non-native affixes. At that point those affixes became part of the English language. These patterns are called **non-native** (cf. Bauer et al 2013: 35). Examples of affixes of foreign origin are:

Prefixes of Latin origin:

bi-	bifocal, bimonthly, biweekly
co-	co-author, coedit, coheir
de-	decaf, decompose
dis-	disagree, disconnect
em-, en-	empower, enable, enthrone
in-	inaccurate, inadequate
il-	illegal, illegitimate
im-	imperfect, imprecise
ir-	irrecoverable, irreducible
non-	noncombatant, nonconformist
pre-	pre-eminent, pre-natal

re-	rebuild, recall, remake
self-	self-command, self-commitment, self-schooled
sub-	subdivide, subspecies
super-	supersonic, superstructure
trans-	transliterate, transoceanic

Suffixes of Romance (Latin, French, Italian) origin:

-able	bankable, copyrightable
-al	recital, renewal
-an, -ian	syntactician, phonetician
-ation	formation, hibernation
-ee	assignee, grantee
-ence	patience, resistance
-ese	journalese, Japanese
-ess	lioness, waitress
-ette	kitchenette, novelette
-(i)fy	intensify, simplify
-ic	allergic, syntactic
-ical	economical, fanatical
-ism	colloquialism, terrorism
-ity	faculty, university
-ive	additive, attractive, constitutive
-ize/-ise	moralize, moralise
-ment	judgement, puzzlement
-or	actor, conductor
-ous	ceremonious, righteous

Prefixes of Greek origin:

anti-	antibody, anti-inflationary, antithesis
aut(o)-	autograph, authentic, autonomy
bio-	biography, biohazard
geo-	geomorphology, geopolitics
hydro-	hydrodynamics, hydroelectric
hyper-	hyperbole, hyperfiction, hypertext
macro-	macroscopic, macrosociology
micro-	microwave, microprocessor
psycho-	psychobiology, psychodrama, psychogenesis
tele-	telebanking, telecommute, teleshopping, teleworking

Suffixes of Greek origin:

-graphy	lexicography, photography
-ic	periodic, magnetic
-ism	alphabetism, womanism
-logy	musicology, phraseology
-phobia	claustrophobia, arachnophobia

Many affixes of Greek or Latin origin were independent words in the source language. When borrowed into English, these words became prefixes or suffixes, also known as **combining forms** (see section 1.2.4.5.), for instance: *aer*, *aero* became a prefix in: *aerobic*, *aeroplane*, *aerosole*, etc. Similar examples include:

Greek word > prefix

megas ‘very large’	megatrends, megamarket, megaprojects
photo ‘light’	photocell, photography
tekhnologia prefix ‘techno-’	techno-rock, techno-wizzard
pseudo	pseudo-cultivated, pseudo-professional

Latin word > prefix

ager ‘field’	‘agri-, agro-’	agriculture
bio ‘life’		biodiversity, bio-chemistry

Affixes of foreign origin were borrowed as parts of certain loans in earlier English. During a later stage, speakers began to combine foreign affixes with native roots and native affixes with foreign roots as well, and formed **hybrids** with the following pattern:

- +/- Germanic prefix + foreign stem +/- Germanic suffix
- +/- foreign prefix + Germanic stem +/- foreign suffix

Hybrid word-formation became quite common in Middle English, as shown by the first attestation of the following derived words:

native root + French suffix	French root + native affix
talkative (1432)	colorless (1380)
loveable (1340)	joyful (1290)
wizard (1440)	mannerly (1375)

In modern English, etymologically Germanic affixes often freely attach to Latinate roots, as schematized in Harley (2006: 165):

[[[Stem] - (Latinate Affix)] - (Germanic Affix)]
nerv + *-ous* + *-ness*
 stem Romance suff. Gmc.suff.

If a word has both Latinate and Germanic derivational affixes, the Latinate ones will occur inside the Germanic ones.

Further reading

More on classifications of affixes, in Adams (2013: ch.3, ch.4), Hulban (2001: 64–76) and others. On hybrid formation, see Minkova and Stockwell (2009: 45).

Self-assessed test 1.1.2.2.

1. Decide whether the derivational affixes in the following examples are governing (change the word class) or restrictive (do not change the word class):

Example:	<i>boy</i> > <i>boyish</i>	N > A	governing
	<i>write</i> > <i>rewrite</i>	V > V	restrictive

<i>alcohol</i> > <i>alcoholic</i>	<i>arrive</i> > <i>arrival</i>
<i>picture</i> > <i>picturesque</i>	<i>wife</i> > <i>ex-wife</i>
<i>clear</i> > <i>clearance</i>	<i>like</i> > <i>dislike</i>
<i>virtue</i> > <i>virtuous</i>	<i>translate</i> > <i>translation</i>
<i>do</i> > <i>undo</i>	<i>moral</i> > <i>moralise</i>
<i>develop</i> > <i>development</i>	<i>moral</i> > <i>amoral</i>

2. Classify these affixes in terms of origin, distinguishing between those borrowed from Latin or French and those inherited from Germanic. Provide one example for each:

-able; -full; -it; -vie; -less; -lee; -ness; re-; -the; un-.

3. The following lexemes are the result of double affixation: *wickedness, restlessness, unhappiness, uneasiness, uncomfortable, unwelcoming, uncomfortable, unselfish, unconquerable, immoderately*. State to what part of speech they belong, the origin of the affixes and identify the hybrids.

Example:

unchangeable – Gm. prefix + foreign root + Gmc. Suffix = hybrid

4. Identify the suffixes in the following lexemes and match the groups of lexemes to the patterns of double suffixation:
 - a. non-native + non-native suffixes
 - b. native (Germanic) + native suffixes
 - c. non-native suffix + native suffix
 1. usefulness, carelessness, foolishness, friendliness
 2. sequentialness, responsiveness
 3. Christianity, recreational, negativity

1.1.2.3. Affixes grouped according to the word class they form

Depending on the class to which the derived word belongs, suffixes are called **nominalisers** (or noun formatives), if the derived word is a noun, **adjectivisers** (or adjective formatives), if the result of derivation is an adjective, **verbalisers** (or verb formatives) and **adverbialisers** (or adverb formatives):

Nominalisers may be added to a verb or an adjective stem:

Verb stem + Nominaliser > Noun

marry	+	-age	>	marriage
arrive	+	-al	>	arrival
drive	+	-er	>	driver

Adjective stem + Nominaliser > Noun

free	+	-dom	>	freedom
American	+	-ism	>	Americanism
kind	+	-ness	>	kindness

Nominal affixes are employed to derive from verbs and adjectives abstract nouns that denote actions, relations, properties or qualities and proper nouns.

Adjectivisers are attached to a noun or a verb stem. Derived adjectives are the result of the following productive patterns:

Noun Stem + Adjectiviser > Adjective

sentiment	+	-al	>	sentimental
custom	+	-ary	>	customary

beauty	+	-ful	> beautiful
woman	+	-ish	> womanish
friend	+	-less	> friendless
fun	+	-y	> funny

Verb stem + Adjectiviser > Adjective

eat	+	-able	> eatable
distrust	+	-ful	> distrustful

Verbalisers are added to a noun or an adjective stem, as shown in the following patterns:

Noun stem + Verbaliser > Verb

length	+	-en	> lengthen
idol	+	-ise	> idolise

Adjective stem + Verbaliser > Verb

black	+	-en	> blacken
American	+	-ise	> americanise

Adverbialisers are affixes attached to adjective or noun stems:

Adjective stem + Adverbialiser > Adverb

slow	+	-ly	> slowly
------	---	-----	----------

Noun Stem + Adverbialiser > Adverb

end	+	-long	> endlong
sky	+	-ward	> skyward
clock	+	-wise	> clockwise

Further reading

For a systematic and extensive account of the derivation of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, see Bauer et al's reference work (2013: ch.12–ch.15).

1.1.2.4. Affix productivity

The property of an affix to take part in coining new words is called **productivity**. It is given by the frequency with which an affix is employed in the language and with which speakers use it in order to create new words. According to this criterion, affixes are regarded as productive (also called active), semi-productive and unproductive (see Adams 2013: 146–153).

The most productive affixes can be added to almost any stem in order to form new words. For instance, the suffix *-er* can attach to an indefinite number of verbal bases: *teacher, worker, employer, reader, buyer*, etc.

Unproductive affixes are no longer used to form new derivatives. For example, the suffix *-th* can attach to a small number of specified words (*true, warm, wide*, etc.) to produce *truth, warmth, width*, but it cannot attach to any other words beyond this set.

Here is a list of prefixes and suffixes grouped according to their productivity:

Prefixes

Productive:	<i>anti-, ex-, extra-, dis-, de-, mis-, non-, out-, re-, self-, sub-, under-</i>
Semi-productive:	<i>ante-, arch-, com-, co-, counter-, hyper-, in-, mid-, neo-, pro-, post-, sub-, super-, semi-, trans-, ultra-, up-, vice</i>
Unproductive:	<i>en-, fore-, with-</i>

Suffixes

Productive:	<i>-able, -an, -ed, -er, -ic, -ist, -ism, -ing, -ish, -ize, -ly, -less, -ness, -tion</i>
Semi-productive:	<i>-ate, -dom, -ful, -hood, -ee, -er, -ette, -ling, -let, -ship, -ward(s)</i>
Unproductive:	<i>-ance, -age, -ent, -sion, -cy, -en, -ify, -ive, -ary, -some, -th.</i>

However, only four of the productive affixes yield large numbers of lexemes, namely adverb-forming *-ly*, negative adjectival *un-* and nominal *-ness* and *-ing*. Productivity is usually associated with the idea of dynamism in language.

The frequency of occurrence of certain affixes can be measured with the help of large electronic text collections, called **corpora**. For the English language, **The British National Corpus** (abbreviated as BNC) is such a collection of texts and conversations from all kinds of sources, which is available on the internet. We can look up the frequency of words in the BNC, by checking the word frequency list provided by the corpus compilers. Thus, the frequency of derived words can be examined by looking at words with certain suffixes. For instance, Plag (2003: 50) identifies 20 derivatives in *-able*, from which *acceptable, advisable* and *admirable* have the highest frequency, while *absorbable* and *actualisable* are low-frequency words. Words that occur only once in a corpus are called

hapax legomena, or shortly **hapaxes**. *Absorbable* and *actualisable* are hapaxes. A hapax is a rare word or some invention by an imaginative speaker.

In modern medical English, affixes of Greek or Latin origin are very productive. For instance, the suffix *-itis*, borrowed from Greek, where it marked the feminine of adjectives, is used to form names of diseases, especially inflammatory ones: *appendicitis*, *bronchitis*, *hepatitis*, *cephalitis*, *arthritis*, *dermatitis*, etc.

In scientific technical language, there are several productive prefixes: *tele-* (*telecommuting*, *telenursing*, *teleconsulting*, *telecare*), *nano-* (*nanotechnology*, *nanomaterials*, *nanotube*, *nanosystems*), *e-* (*e-mail*, *e-books*, *e-gold*, *e-card*, *e-health*, *e-museum*) and *euro-* (*Eurobond*, *Eurodollars*, *euromoney*). Main brand symbols also facilitate the creation of new derivatives: for instance, since the launch of iMac by Macintosh in 1998, a range of brand names appeared by analogy: *iMovie*, *iBook*, *iPod*, *iLife*, *iPhoto*, *iDVD*, *iWeb*, *iTunes*.

Further reading

On ways of measuring productivity, see Plag (2003: 44–68); on the analysis of the factors that block productivity, see Katamba and Stonham (2006: 75–81).

On corpus-based studies of affix productivity in English, see Plag (1999: ch.5), Baayen and Renouf (1996), Plag (1999: ch. 5), or Plag et al (1999).

Book-length studies of mainly structural aspects of productivity are Plag (1999) and Bauer (2001), which also contain useful summaries of the pertinent literature.

1.1.2.5. The semantics of affixes

Affixes have widely generalized meanings, considerably different from the meanings of the root morphemes. Certain affixes can be grouped according to some common semantic traits (cf. Bauer & Huddleston 2012).

1.1.2.5.1. A semantic classification of prefixes

Prefixes belong to the following meaning groups: negative prefixes, size prefixes, supportive and opposing prefixes, reversative and deprivative prefixes, prefixes of location, temporal prefixes and status prefixes:

a) **supportive and opposing prefixes:**

The supportive meaning is conveyed by the prefixes:

pro-	pro-American, pro-life
co-	coexist, co-driver, cooperate

Opposition is expressed by *anti-*, which is very productive, and *counter-*:

anti-	antibody, anti-war, anti-social, anti-abortion
counter-	counteract, counter-example, counter-attack

b) reversative and deprivative prefixes:

The reversative sense indicates the act of undoing a previous act of doing something, while the deprivative sense means removing something:

de-	decontaminate, defrost, decentralise
dis-	disinvite, disqualify, disengage
un-	unlock, unmask, unbutton, undress

c) negative prefixes are used to assign a negative meaning to an adjectival stem:

a-	amoral, asymmetry, apolitical
dis-	discontent, disown, disconnect, dislike
in / il /	inalienable, insane, incomplete, illogical
im / ir-	improper, impossible, irrelevant
non-	non-conformist, non-smoker
un-	unfair, unproductive

The prefix *in-* has the alternant forms *il-*, *im-*, *ir-*, depending on the first sound of the base to which it attaches. These are phonologically distinct variants of the same morpheme, called **allomorphs**; they have similar, but not identical sounds. The *in-* variant appears for vowel-initial words, like *alienable*, and for words that begin with the consonants /t, d, s, z, n/. On words that begin with the consonants /m, p/, we find *im-*. Words that begin with /l/ or /r/ are prefixed with the *il-* or *ir-* allomorphs respectively.

Negative *in-* is no longer productive, while *a-* and *dis-* are now rarely used. *Non-* has a high degree of productivity, but *un-* is the most productive negative prefix. *Un-* and *non-* also attach to noun bases: *unemployment*, *unrest*, *non-member*, *non-resident*, *non-adherence*.

d) prefixes of location assign the meaning of location to the stem:

in front and before: <i>ante-</i> and <i>pre-</i> (Latin), <i>fore-</i> (Gmc.)	
ante-	antechamber, ante-room
fore-	forehead, forefinger
above and over:	
over-	overshadow, overcoat

super-	superstructure, superstar
below, beneath:	
under-	underground, underclothes
sub-	subway, subcontract, sublet
inside/ internal:	
in-	intrinsic, indoors, inroad
mid-	midfield, midstream, midbrain
outside/external:	
extra-	extracranial, extramural
out-	outdoor, outcast, outhouse
between:	
inter-	intergalactic, interstellar
beyond, through:	
trans-	transcontinental, transatlantic

e) **size prefixes** are used to aggregate the meaning of a stem with a size concept. Augmentative prefixes indicate larger size or high degree:

hyper-	<i>'extra, special'</i>	hypersensitive, hyperactive
mega-	<i>'very large'</i>	megastar, megastore
macro-	<i>'large'</i>	macrocosm, macro-economics
out-	<i>'to do sth. better, faster'</i>	outgrow, outlive, outrun
over-	<i>'too much'</i>	overdo, oversimplify
super-	<i>'above, more than, better'</i>	supermarket, superman
ultra-	<i>'beyond, extremely'</i>	ultraviolet, ultra-modern

Diminutive prefixes are very productive. They indicate small size or lower degree:

micro-	microcomputer, microscope
mini-	minibus, miniskirt, minigolf
sub-	subhuman, substandard
under-	undercook, underprivileged

f) **temporal prefixes** can assign the meaning of time-relatedness to the stem:

	before/ in advance/ former
ante-	antenatal, antedate
fore-	foretell, foreshadow, foresee
pre-	pre-war, pre-school, preview

ex-	ex-president, ex-husband
during/ after/ new	
mid-	mid-afternoon, midwinter
post-	post-war, post-election
re-	rebuild, reuse, re-evaluate
neo-	neo-colonialism

g) **professional status prefixes** indicate status or position in a hierarchy:

arch	archbishop, archangel
co-	co-author, co-founder, co-presenter
pro-	proconsul
vice-	vice-president

h) **prefixes of quantification** can aggregate the meaning of a stem with a count concept:

uni- / mono-	unisex, monotheism, monoplane
bi- / di-	bilingual, bicycle, dioxide
multi- /poly-	multinational, polysyllabic
semi-	semicircle, semiautomatic

1.1.2.5.2. A semantic classification of suffixes

In recent morphological research, attention has been paid to the meaning conveyed by suffixes when attached to various types of roots.

a) **Noun-forming suffixes**

Collectivity suffixes derive nouns from nouns:

-dom, -ism, -ery: *brotherhood, friendship, jewellery*

Gender-marking suffixes

-ess indicates ‘a female being’ or an occupation: *actress, stewardess, waitress, heiress*

Diminutive affixes suggest small size, affection, informality.

-ette ‘objects of lesser value’: *articlette, cigarette, storyette*

- let, -ling** ‘small animals’: *piglet, duckling, spiderling*
-ie or -y ‘smallness’: *birdie, doggie, kiddy, puppy*

The suffix *-ie/-y* is the most productive diminutive marker, especially in Scottish, Australian and New Zealand varieties of English. It is found in hypocoristics (pet names): *Billy, Jimmy, Susie*. It is attached to nouns denoting adult persons, usually family members: *daddy, auntie, Betty* with an emotional colouring. It is also found in embellished clippings (see section 1.3.1.): *hanky, nightie, tummy* to mark informal style.

Person or instrument suffixes are added to verbal or nominal roots:

- ant/ -ent** *assistant, informant, president, resident*
-ard, -ling, -ster *drunkard, weakling, gangster* (express disapproval)
-ee *employee, divorcee, nominee*
-er (-or/-ar) *painter, player, organiser*
grinder, boiler, pointer, eraser, silencer (instrument)
author, doctor, tailor
Londoner, New Yorker (inhabitants of a place)
-ist *contortionist, racist, baptist, economist, pianist*
-ster *gangster, mobster, gamester* (negative connotation)

Action/ state / process suffixes

Numerous suffixes added to **verbal stems** form abstract nouns meaning an activity or the result of the activity expressed by the verb:

- al:** *refusal, arrival, referral, committal, cathedral*
-ance, -ence: *performance, ignorance, reference, convergence,*
-ation/-tion/-sion/-ion: *education, organisation, confusion*
-ing: *painting, singing, building, ignoring*
-ment: *announcement, commitment, development,*
-ship, -hood *kingship, motherhood, priesthood*

However, these suffixes are not freely interchangeable. Carstairs-McCarthy (2002: 51) argues that some verbs may take only one suffix, others select more suffixes to convey different abstract meanings. For example, the verb *perform* allows the derivation of a single abstract noun, *performance*, not **performal* or **performation*.

On the other hand, some verbs allow a choice of suffixes (e.g. *commit* > *commitment, committal, comission*), but the nouns thus formed are not synonymous. The verb *commit* may occur with different meanings, for

example ‘to commit a crime,’ ‘to commit an accused person for trial,’ or ‘to commit oneself to a task,’ but, of the three nouns, only *commission* corresponds to the first meaning of the verb, only *committal* to the second, and only *commitment* to the third.

Some suffixes used to derive nouns from adjectives mean basically ‘having the property’ expressed by the base adjective:

-ity:	<i>purity, equality, ferocity, sensitivity, humidity,</i>
-ness:	<i>goodness, tallness, fierceness, sensitiveness,</i>
-ism:	<i>radicalism, conservatism, absenteeism, biculturalism,</i>

Of the three suffixes, *-ness* is the most widely applicable and productive.

b) Adjective-forming suffixes

Suffixes attached to proper nouns:

-(i)an	<i>Elizabethan, Lutheran, Freudian</i> (personal names) <i>African, Australian, European</i> (continents) <i>Mexican, Moroccan, Belgian, Peruvian</i> (countries)
-ic	<i>Celtic, Icelandic, Arabic</i>
-ish	<i>Danish, Polish, Scottish</i>

Further suffixes that commonly form **adjectives from verbs**, with their basic meanings, are:

-able/ -ible	<i>breakable, readable, reliable, watchable</i>
-ent, -ant	<i>repellent, expectant, conversant,</i>
-ive	<i>repulsive, explosive, speculative, contemplative,</i> <i>prohibitive, repetitive, vegetative</i>

The suffix *-able* conveys a meaning like that of a modal in a passive construction: *breakable* means ‘sth. that can be broken’; *-ent* and *-ive* relate to the active voice: *explosive* ‘sth. that can explode.’

Suffixes that form **adjectives from nouns** are more numerous. Here are some examples with the meaning ‘full of, having the quality of’:

-ful:	<i>joyful, hopeful, helpful, meaningful</i>
-al:	<i>original, normal, personal, national</i>
-ish:	<i>boyish, loutish, waspish, selfish,</i>
-ic/ -ical:	<i>classic, classical, economic, economical, historic,</i>

-less	<i>joyless, hopeless, helpless, meaningless, spouseless, reckless</i>
-ous:	<i>advantageous, poisonous, courageous, androgynous, contemporaneous.</i>

Several of the pairs of adjectives ending in *-ic* or *-ical* exhibit differences in meaning (see section 3.4.3.).

c) Verb-forming suffixes

Suffixes that form verbs from adjectives or nouns are:

-ate:	<i>captivate, domesticate, hyphenate, assimilate, integrate</i>
-en:	<i>broaden, sicken, hearten, heighten, lighten, moisten, sharpen, straighten</i>
-ify	<i>simplify, beautify, personify, crucify, magnify, solidify, specify</i>
-ise/-ize	<i>legalise, urbanise, divinise, computerise, hospitalise, televise</i>

With adjectival bases the meaning is ‘to make sth. have a quality’ expressed by the adjective. With noun bases, there is no single generalized meaning. Note that there are two variant spellings for a single suffix *-ise/-ize*. Both spellings are used in BrE, AmE has *-ize*, while AusE and NZE increasingly favour *-ise*.

1.2.2.6. Double/ multiple affixation

Many complex words contain more than one prefix or suffix (cf. Plag 2003: 25–55). In some patterns the presence of an affix triggers the addition of another one. Therefore, there are cases when two suffixes are attached to the same root, or when both a prefix and a suffix are attached to a root in order to form a new word:

Two prefixes may be attached to the same stem to make new words:

ex-vice-president	‘sb. who is no longer a vice-president’
anti-pro-government	‘sb. who is against being pro-government’
pro-anti-government	‘sb. who is for being against the government’
anti-counter-espionage	‘sb. who is against counter-espionage’

Two suffixes are added to the same root in:

root + <i>-ian</i>	+ <i>-ism</i> :	Hegelianism, Cartesianism
root + <i>-ify</i>	+ <i>-ation</i> :	purification, certification
root + <i>-ize</i>	+ <i>-ation</i> :	civilization, organization
root + <i>-ate</i>	+ <i>-ation</i> :	contemplation, incarnation
root + <i>-able</i>	+ <i>-ity</i> :	attainability, inflammability
root + <i>-al</i>	+ <i>-ize</i> :	commercialize, industrialize
root + <i>-ivi</i>	+ <i>-ity</i> :	relativity, productivity
root + <i>-ivi</i>	+ <i>-ness</i> :	objectiveness, obsessiveness
root + <i>-less</i>	+ <i>-ly</i> :	deathlessly
root + <i>-al</i>	+ <i>ly</i> :	accidentally

A prefix and a suffix are attached to the same root in:

<i>un-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-en</i> :	unabridged, unaccustomed
<i>un-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-ing</i> :	unapproving, unbending
<i>un-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-able</i> :	unobtainable, unacceptable, unreadable
<i>de-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-ize</i> :	dehumanize, demoralize
<i>un-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-ment</i> :	unemployment
<i>dis-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-er</i> :	discoverer
<i>de-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-ate</i> :	deactivate
<i>de-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-ate</i> :	dearticulate
<i>dis-</i>	+ root	+ <i>-ous</i> :	disadvantageous

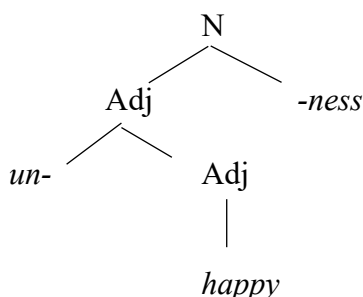
Not all existent patterns are productive. Some of them are preferred over others. For example, the pattern *root* + *-able* + *-ity* is more productive than *root* + *-able* + *-ness* and *root* + *-ive* + *-ness* is more productive than *root* + *-ive* + *-ity* (see section 2.3.2.).

Thus, complex words are created by **concatenation**, i.e. by linking together bases and affixes as in a chain. Information about the order of affixation can be given in terms of a **labelled bracketing**, where each pair of brackets is labelled to indicate the word class of the string (N, V, A, etc.):

<i>desire</i>	[desire] _V = root/ stem 1
<i>desirable</i>	[[desire] _V able] _A = stem 2
<i>undesirable</i>	[un [[desire] _V able] _A] _A = stem 3
<i>undesirability</i>	[[un [[desire] _V able] _A] _A ity] _N

Another way of representing this information is in terms of a branching **tree diagram**, where each branch has at most two branches. Each node corresponds to a pair of brackets (see Harley 2006: 127):

[[un- [happy]_A]_A-ness]_N



The question is what principles governing suffix ordering are concerned. Booij (2005: 71) shows that within a sequence of derivational affixes, the input constraints often predict which order is the correct one. For instance, the ordering of suffixes in *readability* would be:

read + -able > readable + -ity > readability
 verb + -able > adjective + -ity > noun

The suffix order in *read-abil-ity* is determined by the fact that the suffix *-ity* selects adjectives as bases and creates nouns, whereas *-able* takes verbs as inputs in order to form adjectives. Therefore, *-able* must be attached before *-ity*.

Affixation is one of the main word-formation processes that enlarge the vocabulary of the English language.

Further reading

For more detailed surveys of English affixation, see Bauer & Huddleston (2012: 1667–1716), Lieber (2005: 383–418), Greenbaum (1996:434) and Katamba (1994: ch. 4), among others.

For a complete list of the derivational resources of English, see Marchand (1969), who catalogues all prefixes and suffixes in use in mid-twentieth-century English.

For further classifications of affixes, see Minkova and Stockwell (2009: 101–107), Katamba and Stonham (2006: 48–55) and others. On Latinate roots in English, see Ayers (1986).

Bauer et al (2015) deals with the formation and semantics of complex words. On the structure of complex words, especially affixation and compounding, see Adams

(2013). On rules governing suffix ordering, see Katamba and Stonham (2006: ch.6) and Bauer et al (2013: ch.21).

Online dictionary of affixes

The online dictionary *Affixes: the building blocks of English*, available at: <http://www.affixes.org> is based on Quinion, Michael. 2002. *Ologies and Isms: word beginnings and endings*. This dictionary contains more than 1,250 entries for all types of affixes that occur in English: *prefixes, suffixes, combining forms and infixes*, illustrated by some 10,000 examples. Combining forms, functioning as prefixes or suffixes (such as: *bio-*, *cyber-*, *-icide*, *-algia*) account for much of the scientific and technical terminology.

Self-assessed test 1.1.2.3 –1.1.2.6

1. Match the groups of words to the appropriate linguistic labels for the suffixes involved in the derivation of these words:

- a) *originate, classify, symbolize*
- b) *orphanage, nationhood, despotism, robbery*
- c) *forgetful, defiant, advisor, restrictive*
- d) *peaceful, spacious, hearty, ghostly, boyish*
- e) *intensify, solidify, amplify*

1. denominal abstract-noun-forming suffixes
2. denominal adjective-forming suffixes
3. deverbal adjective-forming suffixes
4. denominal verb-forming suffixes
5. deadjectival verb-forming suffixes

2. Group the following derivatives in *-able* into:

a. noun + *-able*:

b. verb + *-able*:

peaceable, fixable, actionable, breakable, companionable, readable, saleable, marriageable, provable, reasonable, perishable, impressionable, fashionable, knowledgeable, serviceable

3. The suffix *-ly* mainly derives adverbs from adjectives: *quick* > *quickly*, but it can also be used to derive adjectives from other

words. Comment on the base of derivation in the following examples: *manly, friendly, stately, womanly, weekly, goodly, northerly, ghostly, deadly, simply, definitely*.

4. *Pre-* serves as a prefix to several categories of words. Identify the categories of words to which *pre-* has been attached: *precondition, precultural, prenatal, prepack, preplan, preselect, prewash*.

5. The suffix *-er* is polysemantic. It conveys the meanings of: Agent, Patient, Instrument, Experiencer, Action, Locative. Match the deverbal nouns to the meaning groups:

baker, atomizer, writer, hearer, diner, disclaimer, blotter, mower, printer, feeler, sleeper, northerner, villager; insider, outsider, air-freshener, designer, explorer, Londoner, farmer, swimmer, blender, waiver, lover, lemon-squeezer, steamer, amuser, toaster, New Yorker, admirer.

6. Consider the root *-dict-* meaning ‘speak, say’ which is found in: *dictate, contradict*. Comment on the type of affixation in each and use these words as the input for further affixation.
7. Comment on the structure of the following complex words, identifying the root, the stem, the affixes: *insufferable, unreheated, ministerially, disapprovingly, carelessness, misstatement*.
8. Analyse the structure of the complex words with double affixation using labelled brackets: *humanitarianism, musically, enchantment, likelihood, revaccination*.
9. Consider the following words: *atheism, circulation, coldness, craftsmanship, fashionable, hopeful, kingdom, neighbourhood, refreshment, waiter*.

- a) For each word identify its lexical category (N, V, A, Adv).
- b) Each word contains more than one morpheme. List all the morphemes and indicate whether they are free or bound.
- c) Indicate for each affix whether it is derivational or inflectional.
- d) State the origin and explain the meaning of the suffixes.

10. Match the following groups of hyphenated derivatives to the appropriate rule:

- a) *anti-inflammatory, co-ordinate, de-energize*
- b) *psycho-active, semi-automatic*
- c) *re-discover, mega-mega-rich*
- d) *re-cover vs. recover, re-sign vs. resign, re-form vs. reform, re-mark vs. remark*
- e) *pre- and post-operatively, pro- and anti-government forces*

- 1. to avoid identical vowels
- 2. to separate one prefix from another
- 3. to disambiguate words with the same spelling (homographs)
- 4. to show coordination of prefixes
- 5. to avoid sequences of different vowels

11. Use brackets to represent the order of combination of prefixes and suffixes in the complex words: *institutionalisation, redecorating, carelessly, disapproval, fictionalisation*.

12. For each of the following derivational affixes, find five words that contain the affix. (You can use an electronic dictionary, e.g. www.onelook.com). State whether the stem to which the affix is attached is bound or free: a. *-dom*; b. *-ship*; c. *-ous*; d. *-hood*; e. *-age*

1.2. Compounding

Compounding (also known as **composition**) is a process of coining new words by combining two or more than two stems or roots:

blackboard (two-member compound)
communication technology equipment (three-member compound)

The first element of a compound is analysed as a stem and not as a word, that is why inflections on the first constituent are commonly absent (for example, the plural inflection *-s* occurs on the second component, not on the first: *blackboards*, not **blacksboard*. Only case and number inflections survive on the first component of a compound in a few instances.

The **genitive** inflection is recognizable in a few compounds of the type: *craftsman, craftswoman, sportsman, townspeople, tradesman, statesman*

and in compounds as set phrases: *a day's hunt, a good day's work, a goodnight's sleep, a half hour's drive, a minute's silence, a moment's hesitation, a morning's wait, barber's shop, cat's paw*, etc.

The **plural** inflection is recognizable in the spaced compounds: *arms race, communications network/ officer/ problem/ satellite/ specialist/ system, customs barrier/ co-operation/ house/ officer/ union, fast goods, goods circulation/ train/ truck, sports agent/ car/ centre/ page, special needs children*.

1.2.1. The meaning of compounds

Compounds may be **compositional**, when the meaning of the compound is determined by the meanings of its parts, or **non-compositional**, when the meaning of the compound is not the predictable sum of the meanings of its components. The meaning of many compounds is based on the sum of the meanings of the component words. The basic meaning is rendered by the last element, while the first one specifies some additional meaning: e.g. *fox-hunter* is 'a hunter specialised in hunting foxes,' and *wolf-hunter* is 'a hunter who usually hunts wolves' (see Adams 2014: 82–86). Similarly, *classroom, evening-gown, sleeping-car*, etc. These are also called **non-idiomatic compounds**.

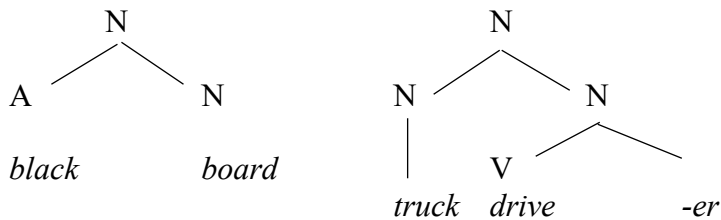
However, there are compounds in which one of the components has changed its meaning: *blackboard* (it is neither a board, not necessarily black), *football* (a game), *lady-killer* (not a killer but a man fascinating women). There are also compounds whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of the components: *ladybird* (is not a bird, but an insect), *tallboy* (is not a boy, but a piece of furniture), *bluebottle* (may denote either a plant or an insect, but not a bottle), *man-of-war* (war ship) (cf. Antrushina 1999: 108). Compounds included in these two groups are known as **idiomatic compounds**.

1.2.2. Synthetic vs. root compounds

Two forms of compounds are often distinguished: **synthetic** (or **verbal**) **compounds** and **root compounds**.

Verbal compounds are the ones in which the second stem is derived from a verb with one of the affixes (agentive *-er*, nominal and adjectival *-ing*, and the passive adjectival *-en*): *truck driver, gift-giving, windblown, waste disposal*. In root compounds (or primary compounds, the second stem is not verbal (*file cabinet, blackboard, red hot*)).

The structures attributed to the two types of compounding can be visually represented as labelled trees:



The structural analysis shows that root compounds like *blackboard* consist of two stems combined as one, with the compound, as a whole, bearing the category and morphosyntactic features of the right-hand stem. In contrast, in synthetic compounds, deverbal nouns, like *driver* are compounded with another stem (*truck*), the derived word forming the head of the compound, (cf. Selkirk 1982: ch.2).

Synthetic compounding is highly productive in English, as is the root compounding of nouns. Consider the following examples of **synthetic** nominal compounds:

- a. sword-swallower, heart-breaker, church-goer
- b. money-changer, typesetter

The analysis of such compounds seems to be problematic between two interpretations:

sword + [swallow + -er]
 [sword + swallow] + -er

One interpretation might be that derivation in *-er* takes place first [*swallow* + *-er*] and the compounding *sword-swallower* second, but in English *swallower* and *goer* are not established words, they are possible, but they do not occur as words of their own.

Another option would be to analyse these compounds as being the result of compounding [*sword* + *swallow*] first, followed by derivation in *-er* (*sword-swallower*). This analysis is also inadequate because verbal compounding is not a productive process in English, and hence compounds like *sword-swallow* or *heart-break* do not exist in the language.

What can be noticed here is that the use of one word-formation implies the use of another word-formation process. The possible words *swallower*

and *breaker* are used as the heads of nominal compounds. The term **synthetic compounding** is traditionally used to indicate that this kind of word-formation looks like the simultaneous use of compounding and derivation.

Such conflation of compounding and derivation is also found for other types of word-formation, as illustrated by *blue-eyed*, *short-sighted*, etc., in which the adjective + adjective compounding is conflated with the formation of denominal adjectives (note that *eyed* itself or *sighted* is not an established word of English).

Noun incorporation is a similar process that involves the combination of a noun and a verb into a verbal compound: *mountain-climbing*, *word-processing*. Noun incorporation is used primarily to form nouns that express an activity.

Synthetic compounding and noun incorporation can be seen as the simultaneous use of compounding and derivational morphology in coining a new compound. (cf. Booij 2005: §4.5.)

1.2.3. Endocentric vs. exocentric compounds.

From the point of view of the relationships between the terms of the compound, compounds can be grouped into **syntactic** and **asyntactic** compounds.

1.2.3.1. Syntactic compounds express in a condensed form the syntactic relationships in a sentence. Syntactic compounds can be classified according to the semantic and grammatical relationships holding between the elements that make them up into: endocentric and exocentric.

Endocentric compounds have at least one head or centre, on which the first component is dependent, e.g. *truck driver* has the head *driver* on which the stem *truck* is dependent. The referent of the compound is always the same as the referent of its head, for instance: *a truck driver* is a kind of driver. Thus, semantically, these compounds are hyponyms (see section 3.3.1) of the head (*a truck driver* is a hyponym of the term *driver*). Endocentric compounds are of three main types.

Attributive compounds, such as *windmill*, *greenhouse*, *sky blue*, *icy cold*, have a modifier-head, structure in which the left-hand member somehow modifies the right-hand member.

Coordinate compounds contain two heads: *bitter-sweet*, *typist-clerk*, *composer-conductor*, *fighter-bomber*, *deaf-mute*, *boyfriend*. The compound is made up of two stems of equal importance, meaning ‘both...and...’ (*deaf-*

mute means ‘He is both deaf and mute’; a *producer-director* is both a producer and a director and a *fighter bomber* is equally a fighter and a bomber). The relationship between the stems is that of coordination. Both stems are equally sharing head-like characteristics. Such compounds in which the components are of equal status are also called **dvandva** (the Sanskrit name) ‘**appositional**’ or **copulative compounds**.

Subordinative compounds contain one element that is interpreted as the argument of the other, usually the relation is that between a verb and its object, for instance: *truck driver* is equivalent to ‘he drives a truck’ (verb + object). Typically, in such compounds one stem is a verb or is derived from a verb; these are the so-called synthetic compounds:

hand mixer, lion tamer	(suffixation in <i>-er</i>)
truck driving, food shopping	(suffixation in <i>-ing</i>)
meal preparation, home invasion	(suffixation in <i>-ation</i>)
cost containment	(suffixation in <i>-ment</i>)

Most of the compounds are both formally endocentric (they belong to the same word class as their second component) and semantically endocentric (the compound is a hyponym of the grammatical head).

By contrast, in **exocentric syntactic compounds**, also called **bahuvrihi compounds** (the Sanskrit name), neither stem is a head. The referent of the compound is not the referent of the head, for instance: *bluejacket* means neither ‘blue’ nor ‘jacket,’ but a person, ‘a seaman in the Navy.’ Exocentric compounds may also be of all three types:

- a) **attributive compounds** like *air head*, *meat head*, *bird brain*, *lazybones*. do not refer to types of heads or brain, but to types of people, usually stupid or disagreeable people. For instance, an *air head* is not a kind of head, but a person with nothing but air in her head. Similarly, a *redhead* is ‘a person with red hair,’ a *flat-foot* is a ‘policeman (slang)’ and an *egghead* is an ‘intellectual.’ The compound is not a hyponym of one of its elements, and thus appears to lack a head or perhaps to have a head (or ‘centre’) external to the compound itself.
- b) **coordinative compounds** (*parent-child*, *doctor-patient*), the compound as a whole refers to a relationship (e.g. between a parent and a child or a doctor and a patient).
- c) **subordinative compounds**: *pickpocket* is not a kind of pocket, but rather a person who picks pockets (verb + object); *cut-throat* is not a

kind of throat, but a person competing with others in an unpleasant way (verb + object).

Headless or exocentric compound nouns do not reflect a productive pattern in modern English. There is only a relatively small number of compounds of this type in English.

1.2.3.2. Asyntactic compounds in which the usual grammatical patterns are obscured; the members of the compound do not combine in syntactic constructions, e.g. *in-and-in* ‘breeding carried out repeatedly among closely related individuals of the same species to eliminate or intensify certain characteristics.’

Further reading

On the classification of compounds, see Bisetto and Scalise (2005), Lieber (2010: §3.4), Lieber (2009: ch.18).

For a clear classification of the various classes of endocentric compounds, see Bauer et al’s (2013: ch.20) reference work on English morphology. On exocentric compounds, see Bauer (2005b).

Advanced reading on the structure of words and the system of rules for generating that structure, in Selkirk (1982).

Self-assessed test 1.2.2.-1.2.3.

1. Decide whether the following are synthetic or root compounds:
dog walker, windmill, hand washing, hard hat, homemade, ice cold, red hot.
2. Decide whether the following compounds are endocentric or exocentric: *bookseller, blockhead, turncoat, spoil-sport, bird watch.*
3. State whether the head occurs on the left-hand or on the right-hand of the compound. Which pattern is less frequently encountered?

attorney general, wind screen, mother-in-law, daydreamer, notary public, sales receipt, hardworking, gamekeeper.
4. Classify the italicized compounds according to the syntactic relationship between the constituents into attributive, coordinative and subordinative compounds:

*house-hunting, secretary-stenographer, horse-riding,
lawn-mower, hero-martyr, wristwatch, scientist-explorer,
book shelf, lighthouse, shop-clearance, blue blood*

1.2.4. Compounds vs. phrases

When the final component is a noun, the need arises to distinguish between compounds and syntactic phrases. (Note that compound verbs and adjectives cannot be mistaken for phrases).

Similarities between compound nouns and noun phrases

Compound nouns have two properties that indicate that, to a certain extent, they are like syntactic phrases:

- a. The process of compounding can be applied recursively to compounds:

compounds	noun phrases
ice-cream	[the destruction]
ice-cream maker	[the destruction of the city]
ice-cream maker society	[the destruction of the city in two days]

Just as syntactic phrases can be expanded by increasing the number of the constituents, so can compounds be combined to form other compounds with triple or multiple components. This property is called **recursiveness**.

The analysis of the structure of the compounds with three or four constituents is dependent on the way the compound is built. Compounds made up of three constituents may be ambiguous between two interpretations, depending on whether the base meaning is derived from the last component, as a single word or as two words:

American history [teacher] ‘a teacher who teaches American history’
 American [history teacher] ‘a history teacher who is American’
 silver anniversary [ring] ‘a ring for the silver anniversary’
 silver [anniversary ring] ‘an anniversary ring made of silver’

- b. The relations between the constituents of a compound resemble the relations between the constituents of a sentence:

truck-driving	predicate-argument	He drives a truck.
apprentice-welder	apposition	The welder, an apprentice, is my son.
a file cabinet	head-modifier	a brown cabinet

The relation between the elements of the compound *truck-driving* resembles the predicate-argument relation in the equivalent clause: *He drives a truck*. In the compound *apprentice-welder* the relation between the components is similar to an appositive one. In the compound *file cabinet*, *file* modifies *cabinet*, just like *brown* modifies *cabinet* in the noun phrase [*a brown cabinet*].

Distinctions between compounds and phrases

As compounds and syntactic phrases have certain common characteristics, linguists have decided upon several criteria to distinguish between them. They are as follows:

a. Spelling

Compounds can be spelt solidly, as two separate words or can have a hyphenated spelling, in which case they are also called **hyphenes**:

solid compound	spaced compound	hyphenated compound/ hyphene
pickpocket basketball	breakfast room fair copy	lion-hearted long-distance-runner

Solid or closed compounds most likely consist of short (mono-syllabic) words that often have been established in the language for a long time: *housewife*, *lawsuit*, *wallpaper*, *basketball*, etc.

The **spaced or open compounds** consist of newer combinations of usually longer words, such as *distance learning*, *lawn tennis*, etc.

In **hyphenated compounds** two or more words are connected by a hyphen. These are either compounds that contain affixes, such as *house-build(er)* and *single-mind(ed)(ness)*, or adjective-adjective compounds and verb-verb compounds, such as *blue-green* and *freeze-dried*. Compounds that contain articles, prepositions or conjunctions, *mother-of-pearl* and *salt-and-pepper*, are also often hyphenated.

Usage in the US and in the UK, differs and often depends on the individual choice of the writer rather than on a rule; therefore, open, hyphenated, and closed forms may be encountered for the same compound noun, such as the triplet:

<i>girlfriend</i>	is the spelling given by <i>Collins Concise dictionary of the English language</i> and the 9th edition of the <i>Concise Oxford dictionary</i>
<i>girl friend</i>	is the spelling provided in <i>Webster's third new international dictionary</i>
<i>girl-friend</i>	in the 7th edition of the <i>Concise Oxford dictionary</i>

Whether a compound is open, hyphenated or solid is a reflection of the degree to which it has been accepted as a lexeme by the speakers of English. Dictionaries may differ on spelling, but there seems to be a tendency to reduce hyphenation.

However, lack of consensus and uniformity in the spelling of certain compounds in English makes this criterion less reliable. In contrast, noun phrases are spelt as separate words: [NP *the pretty girl*].

b. The phonological criterion

In compound nouns the primary stress falls on the first word and the second word gets secondary stress, while in noun phrases both content words receive primary stress:

Compound nouns	Phrase
a 'blackbird 'a kind of bird'	[NP a 'black 'bird] 'a bird that is black'
a 'bluebell 'a kind of spring flower'	[NP a 'blue 'bell] 'a bell that is blue'
a 'blackboard	[NP a 'black 'board] 'a board that is black'
a 'redcoat 'a soldier'	[NP a 'red 'coat] 'a coat that is red'
a 'redskin 'an American Indian'	[NP 'red 'skin] 'skin that is sunburnt'

c. The morphological criterion

In compound nouns the first component is grammatically invariable, the plural ending is attached to the whole, while in noun phrases, both components can be inflectionally marked:

Compound	Phrase
tallboy - tallboys 'piece of furniture'	[NP the tallest boys]

Compounds have morphological integrity, i.e. the elements of a compound cannot be split up by other words, nor can they be modified by *very*. For example, the adjective *American* cannot intervene between the first and the second element of the compound, but it can be inserted in the noun phrase:

Compound	Phrase
a truck driver	[_{NP} a careful driver]
*a truck American driver	[_{NP} a careful American driver]

Furthermore, the degree adverb *very* can intensify the adjective in the noun phrase, but it cannot be used with a compound:

Compound	Phrase
*very blackbirds	[_{NP} very black birds]
*very blackboard	[_{NP} very black boards]

d. Word order

The order of the components in a compound is fixed, while the order of the constituents in a phrase is free. For example, the adjectives and the nouns in the noun phrases below can be replaced, but the replacement of the components in compounds is not possible:

Compound	Phrase
a blackbird	[_{NP} a black bird]
*a greenbird	[_{NP} a green bird]
	[_{NP} a white animal]
a redcoat	[_{NP} a red coat]
*a greencoat	[_{NP} a green coat]
	[_{NP} a red scarf]
	[_{NP} a red cap]
	[_{NP} a brown jacket]

e. The semantic criterion

Compounds have an idiomatic meaning. Two compounds built on the same combinatory pattern and using words belonging to the same semantic field do not have a similar meaning or, at most, they share only one sense:

sunstruck	‘affected or touched by the sun’
moonstruck	‘marked by mental unbalance’

It can be noticed that the combinatorial pattern of these compounds is: **noun + past participle**. The nouns belong to the same semantic field of ‘celestial bodies,’ but the resulting compounds have different meanings.

Similarly, the following compounds have the identical structure: **noun + Agent noun** and involve the use of nouns belonging to the semantic field of ‘wild animals’:

wolf-hunter	‘person who hunts wolves’
fox-hunter	‘person who hunts foxes’
lion-hunter	‘a person who seeks the company of celebrities’

Nonetheless, the compound *lion-hunter* has a meaning based on a metaphorical extension of the noun *lion*, typically associated with the idea of power and strength.

Further reading

For further discussions on the reliability of the criteria used to distinguish between compounds and phrases, see Plag (2003:137–142); Hulban (2001:77–87), Katamba and Stonham (2006: 306–334) and for the theoretical developments in the study of synthetic and root compounds, see Lieber (2005: 376–392).

Self-assessed test 1.2.4.

1. Explain how recursiveness accounts for the formation of the compounds:

radiation safety training manual
marina designer training program
airline cabin crew member
business project management training services
project designer training course
patent infringement lawsuit
swine flu vaccine patent lawsuit

2. The following triconstituent compounds are ambiguous between two readings. Use brackets to provide the two interpretations and make up sentences to illustrate each meaning:

<i>Ideal Home Exhibition</i>	<i>student film society</i>
<i>long term contract</i>	<i>Old English teacher</i>
<i>police dog trainer</i>	<i>kitchen towel rack</i>

3. Group the following compounds and account for their spelling:

- a) solid: *tablecloth*,
- b) spaced: *breakfast room*,
- c) hyphenated *heart-disease*,

the armed forces, background, class-consciousness, dress circle, first-offender, Highlander, light-minded, lipstick.

4. Find reasons to prove that the examples in a) are compounds and those in b) are noun phrases:

- a) *sweetheart, cotton-plant*
- b) *sweet taste, cotton dress*

1.2.5. An inventory of compounding patterns

In traditional lexicology compounds are grouped by the word class to which they belong (cf. Plag 2003: 181–207; Bauer & Huddleston 2012: §19.4). Compounds usually have two components, each belonging to one of the lexical categories/ word classes: noun, adjective, verb, preposition, etc. The compound itself may belong to the lexical category Noun, Verb or Adjective.

1.2.5.1. Compound nouns (also **nominal compounds**) have nouns as their heads. The most frequent patterns include the combinations: noun + noun, adjective + noun, preposition + noun, verb + noun.

Noun-centred compounds have a noun in final position, functioning as head:

- a. **noun + noun**: *ashtray, birdcage, bedtime*. This is the most productive kind of compounding in English.
- b. **adjective + noun**: *grandmother, mainland, small talk*. This pattern is still productive, evident from relatively recent compounds as: *software, hardware, hotline*, etc.
- c. **verb + noun**: *driveway, payday, swimsuit, hovercraft, chewing-gum, living-room, drinking-water*. In such compounds the verbal element takes the *-ing* affix and depends on the noun (*living-room* means ‘a room for living’).

Verb-centred compound nouns.

The central element is a verb, simple or derived, and the relation between the parts is typically that between a verb and its complements in a clause:

- a. **verb + noun**: *pickpocket, breakwater, scarecrow*. The noun part corresponds to the object of an equivalent clausal construction (*It breaks the water.*). This compounding pattern is no longer productive.
- b. **noun + verb** (without suffix): *earthquake, sunset, waterfall*. The noun corresponds to the subject of the equivalent clause (*earthquake* means ‘the earth quakes’).
- c. **noun + deverbal noun** (in *-er*): *stage-manager, songwriter, dishwasher, screwdriver, lawn-mower, city-dweller, freedom-fighter, theatre-goer*. The suffix *-er* shows that the whole compound denotes the person or the thing corresponding to the subject of the clausal construction (*songwriter* means ‘He writes songs’).
- d. **noun + verbal noun** in *-ing*: *brainwashing, housekeeping, shop-lifting*
- e. **verb + preposition**: *breakthrough, runaway, take-off, look-out, drop-out*. This pattern is still productive. Most often the verb and the preposition occur adjacently in a clause (*drop-out* means ‘He is going to drop out of the race’).
- f. **preposition + verb**: *intake, outlook, overflow, offspring*.
- g. **deverbal noun in -er + preposition**: *passer-by, runner-up, onlooker, bystander*. The nominalizing suffix *-er* gives an agent interpretation to the compound (*passer-by* means ‘He passes by.’)
- h. **verbal element** takes *-ing*: *summing-up, upbringing, uprising*.
- i. **adjective + verb** in *-er*: *best-seller, free-thinker, loud-speaker*.

1.2.5.2. Compound adjectives (also adjectival compounds)

Adjective-centred compound adjectives:

- a. **noun + adjective**: *ice-cold, paper-thin, snow-white, steel-blue, ankle-deep, shoulder-high, skin-deep, burglar-proof, car-sick, user-friendly, self-confident, self-conscious, self-evident*. Most compound adjectives convey a comparative/ intensifying meaning: *ice-cold* means ‘cold as ice,’ ‘thin as paper,’ measurement ‘the water was deep’(productive), or correspond to an adjective with complement construction ‘proof against burglars.’ Some are compounds with *self* as a first constituent.

- b. **adjective + adjective:** *bitter-sweet, deaf-mute, Swedish-Irish, dark-blue, red-hot, pale-green, icy-cold*. Either the two adjectives have equal status in coordinative compounds (*bitter-sweet* means ‘bitter and sweet’), or the first adjective conveys an intensifying meaning in subordinative compounds (*icy-cold* means ‘very cold’).

Verb-centred compound adjectives:

- a. **noun + present participle** as head: *breath-taking, heart-breaking, cost-cutting, thought-provoking, law-abiding, theatre-going*. This pattern is very productive. The noun corresponds to the object in a clausal equivalent (*cost cutting* means ‘They cut the costs’) or to the object of a preposition (*law-abiding* means ‘to abide by the law’).
- b. **adjective/adverb + present participle:** *easy-going, hard-working, strange-looking*
- c. **noun + past participle:** *home-made, drug-related, safety-tested, new-born, self-taught, self-appointed, self-posessed, plain-spoken, short-lived, well-behaved*. This is a highly productive pattern; compounds generally correspond to passive constructions (*home-made* means ‘it was made at home’); some compounds have active voice equivalents (*well-behaved* means ‘he behaves well’).

1.2.5.3. Compound verbs

There are fewer compound verbs than compound nouns and adjectives. Many of the compound verbs are formed by other word-formation processes than compounding, namely back-formation and conversion (see sections 1.7., 1.4.). The main patterns of compounding are:

- a. **noun + noun:**
 back derivation: *baby-sit, brainwash, ghostwrite*
 conversion: *whitewash, daydream*
- b. **preposition + noun/verb:** *outgrow, overcharge, overflow*
- c. **verb + verb:** *cook-chill, freeze-dry*

The largest class of compounds in English is that of compound nouns (more precisely, the noun-noun compounds), which account for almost 90% of the total number of compounds.

Further reading

Bauer (1998b) deals with the distinction between phrases and compounds.

For the discussion of the distinguishing features of the different types of compounds, see Adams (2014: ch.6, ch.7, ch.8), Bauer (2006: 459–497), Plag (2003: 142–162), Carstairs-McCarthy (2002: ch.6).

Bauer & Huddleston (2012: 1646–1666) provide descriptive overviews of a wide range of more or less common compounding patterns.

Self-assessed test 1.2.5.

1. Match the groups of compound verbs to the compounding patterns:

V + V; P + V; Adv + V; A + V; N + V.

- a. *sidestep, manhandle, proof read*
- b. *stir-fry, dry-clean, freeze-dry, drink-drive*
- c. *overrate, underline, outrun*
- d. *whitewash, blacklist, deep-fry, shortcut, blindfold*
- e. *downsize, upgrade*

2. Group the following compound words according to their structure:

*first-offender, fur-lined, Highlander, late-comer,
light-minded, stocking, weavers, three-cornered,
treasure-seekers, warm-hearted.*

N + N + -er:	<i>week-ender</i>
A + N + -er:	<i>left-hander</i>
V + V + -er:	<i>go-getter</i>
Adv + V + -er:	<i>new-comer</i>
N + V + -er:	<i>theatre-goer</i>
Num + N + -er:	<i>first-nighter</i>
A + N + -ed:	<i>broad-shouldered</i>
N + N + -ed:	<i>doll-faced</i>
Num + N + -ed:	<i>two sided</i>

1.2.6. Neo-classical compounds

In neo-classical compounding one or both constituents of a word are roots borrowed from Greek and Latin that do not correspond to lexemes, so-called **combining forms**:

- a. bio-logy, psycho-logy, socio-logy, geo-graphy, tomo-graphy

- b. tele-camera, tele-gram, tele-kinesis, tele-phone, tele-vision
- c. bureau-crat, magneto-metry, magneto-hydro-dynamic

Combining forms are divided into initial combining forms (*bio-*, *psycho-*, *socio-*, *geo-*, *tomo-*), and final combining forms (*-logy*, *-graphy*).

In (a) the compounds consist of two combining forms. The compounds in (b) show that combining forms can be followed by lexemes. In the case of *television*, for instance, the combining form *tele-* is followed by the lexeme *vision*. In (c) a lexeme is followed by a final combining form, for instance in *bureaucrat*, the first constituent *bureau* is a lexeme, unlike *-crat*. Most words when used in the first position of a neo-classical compound have a linking vowel *o*, as in *magneto-metry*.

Neo-classical compounds are different from normal compounds in that the meanings of the constituent parts cannot be derived from the meaning of corresponding lexemes. The reason why such words are neo-classical compounds is that in most cases they have not been borrowed as a whole directly from the classical languages Greek and Latin. Instead, they have been coined in the course of time by combining these root morphemes. In fact, neo-classical compounding has given rise to a huge pan-European lexicon. European languages share huge parts of the set of neo-classical compounds which are used in science, government, culture, and business.

A lot of initial combining forms have been created by means of truncation. A good example is the pan-European initial combining form *euro-* that is a truncation of the word *Europa*. Other examples of such truncations are *afro-*, *compu-*, *crea-*, *cine-*, *cyber-*, *digi-*, *docu-*, and *flexi-* that are all used very productively to coin new words in most European languages (see Booij 2005: §4.3). In scientific and technical language one of the most productive compound elements is *digital* (*digital signal*, *digital control*, *digital physics*, *digital television*, *digital monitor*, etc.)

In short, neo-classical compounding is a very important source of new words, even though it does not combine lexemes, and therefore does not possess the same degree of semantic transparency as regular compounds. The observations on neo-classical compounding lead to the conclusion that it is not always easy or possible to decide if a complex word is a case of compounding or of derivation. In the domain of neo-classical compounding the boundary between compounding and derivation is blurred.

Further reading

Introductory reading and good practice on the use of Latin and Greek morphemes in technical and scientific terminology, in Denning et al (2007: ch. 8, ch.9, ch.10). Neo-classical word-formation is discussed in Bauer (1998a), among others.

Further reading on main word-formation processes

For introductory reading on productive lexical processes in present-day English, see Hickey (2006).

For an overview of the literature on the productive word-formation processes (affixation, compounding and conversion) in English, see Lieber (2005: 375–428); on the productivity of the main word-formation processes, see also Carstairs-McCarthy 2002: ch. 8).

Self-assessed test 1.2.5

1. *Cyber-* has become a popular prefix during the 1990s. It has been attached principally to nouns to form new nouns, as in *cyberspace*. Look up the prefix in Quinion's (2002) on-line dictionary available at: <http://www.affixes.org>. List the words that use the prefix *cyber-*, identifying the examples of *cyber-* being prefixed to a lexical category other than a noun. Give the meanings of these words.
2. Find out the origin and the meaning of the following combining forms: *eco-*, *nano-*, *-pathy*, *-phobia* and supply examples of words. (Check with <http://www.affixes.org>).
3. Each of these neo-classical compounds contains at least one bound Graeco-Latin combining form. With the help of a dictionary, identify a meaning for each such combining form, and find another word that contains it: *nanometre*, *polyphony*, *leucocyte*, *omnivorous*.
4. Find the meaning of the two-combining forms that produce the neo-classical compounds: *astronaut*, *bibliography*, *xenophobia*, *pseudonym*, *antipathy*, *anthropology*.

Example: *astro* (star) + *naut* (sailor) = *astronaut*

5. Give the Greek-derived technical terms with the following meanings. Identify the combining forms and give their meanings:
 - a. 'study of skin diseases'
 - b. 'flying dinosaur with wing membrane connected to an elongated finger'
 - c. 'a small ruling class having the whole political power in their hands.'

1.3. Clipping

Derivation and **composition** are word-building processes based on addition. In contrast, **clipping** (also known as **shortening** or **contraction**) is a process of shortening the word form, and involves cutting off part of an existing word or phrase to leave a phonologically shorter sequence. The word undergoing clipping is known as a **prototype** (or **original**), while the resulting word is a **clipped form** (or the **residue**).

1.3.1. Types of clippings

In clippings, a multisyllabic word is reduced in size, usually to one or two syllables. Traditionally, three types of clipping have been identified: aphaeresis, syncope and apocope:

fore-clipping (or **aphaeresis**): the loss of initial syllable

airplane > plane
exchange > change
omnibus > bus

syncope or **medial clipping**: the loss of syllable in medial position (unproductive today)

fantasy > fancy
spectacles > specs

back-clipping (or **apocope**): loss of syllable in final position (very productive)

advertisement > ad
bicycle > bike
cinematograph > cinema
dormitory > dorm
taximeter > taxi
condominium > condo

In terms of productivity, back-clipping is the most common type.

Plain clippings are almost always monosyllabic: *lab*, *doc*; they consist of the clipped form. There are also **embellished clippings**, in which other

operations are applied to the clipped form to produce a new word (clipping followed by suffixation). These are common in informal AusE. (cf. Bauer & Huddleston 2012: 1636) with the suffix *-er*+plural inflection, the suffix *-ie/-y* or the suffix *-o*:

bathers	<	bathing shorts	
swimmers	<	swimming shorts	
barbie	<	barbecue	journos < journalists
pollie	<	politician	garbo < garbage collector
rellies	<	relatives	

1.3.2. Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a special form of clipping consisting of the omission of the head in a compound. Ellipsis involves the shortening of an existing compound to the modifier element that comes to take on the meaning of the whole compound:

final examinations	>	finals
jet-propelled plane	>	jet
soap opera	>	soap
public house	>	pub

Ellipsis of the head in a compound can be accompanied by back-clipping of the first term, the modifier:

graduate-student	>	grad
public house	>	pub
zoological garden	>	zoo

Ellipsis, back-clipping and suffixation can be combined to coin new words:

grandmother	>	granny
moving picture	>	movie
talking picture	>	talkie

1.3.3. Truncation

Truncation is a process in which the relationship between a derived word and its base is expressed by the lack of phonetic material in the derived word (cf. Plag 2003: 116).

Truncated names are the result of clipping:

Elizabeth	>	Liz	(fore- and back-clipping)
		Beth	(fore- and medial clipping)
Patricia	>	Pat	(back-clipping)
		Trish	(fore- and back-clipping)
Evelyn	>	Eve	(back-clipping)
		Lyn	(fore-clipping)

All truncated names are monosyllabic. The material surviving truncation may be the first syllable (*Albert* > *Al*, *Alfred* > *Alf*), the second syllable, if it is primarily stressed, (*Adolphus* > *Dolph*, *Augustus* > *Guss*), or even the secondarily stressed syllable (*Abigail* > *Gail*, *Adelbert* > *Bert*).

Truncation may operate in connection with suffixation. Truncations can be the input to **diminutive formation**. Diminutives occur in two orthographic variants in *-y* or *-ie*, which are pronounced identically:

Andrew	>	Andy	(back-clipping and <i>y</i> -suffixation)
Patricia	>	Patty	
Rebecca	>	Becky	
Suzanne	>	Suzy	
Albert	>	Bertie	(back-clipping and <i>ie</i> -suffixation)
Angela	>	Angie	
Australian	>	Aussie	
aunt	>	auntie	
David	>	Dave, Davey	

Truncated names can be distinguished from *-y* diminutives, both semantically and formally. Truncated personal names have an affective load and function as **hypocoristics** (names of endearment). In many cases, the stressed syllable of the full form is the core of the truncated name, which consists of one or two syllables (the acute accent indicates word stress):

Dave	<	Dávid	Liz	<	Elízabeth
Kate	<	Kátherine	Sue	<	Súsan

Diminutives (*sweetie*, *auntie*) convey, in addition to familiarity, a positive attitude towards the person or thing referred to (see Schneider 2003 for discussion). Formally, truncated names are monosyllabic, while diminutives are disyllabic.

1.3.4. Abbreviation

Abbreviation (also called **alphabetism** or **initialism**), like truncation and blending, involves loss of material. It is defined as a process of shortening words, based on a reduction of an apocope type (see Minkova and Stockwell 2009: §3.5.).

Abbreviations are commonly formed by taking the initial letters of multi-word sequences to make up a new word, which is pronounced as a combination of the alphabet letters:

anno Domini	>	A.D., AD
Bachelor of Arts	>	BA
before Christ	>	B.C.
Doctor of Medicine	>	MD
Master of Arts	>	MA
Member of Parliament	>	MP
European Community	>	EC

Developments in the field of computer science have given rise to an increasing number of abbreviations:

AT	<	advanced technology
CD-ROM	<	compact disc read-only memory
EDP	<	electronic data processing
MS-DOS	<	Microsoft Disc Operating System
PIF	<	Program Information File
IBM	<	International Business Machines

Abbreviations may preserve several non-initial letters, but the abbreviated word is pronounced entirely:

avenue	>	Ave
company	>	co.
incorporated	>	inc.
lieutenant	>	Lieut.
manuscripts	>	MMS
road	>	Rd.
street	>	St.
saint	>	St.

Latin words are also frequently abbreviated, some are read in their original forms or in English:

abbreviation of the Latin words			English equivalent
c.f.	/ˈsi: ˈef/	confer	compare
e.g.	/ˈi: ˈdʒi:/	exempli gratia	for example
et. al	/et æl/	et alia	and others
i.e.	/ˈai i:/	id est	that is
etc.	/it ˈsetrə/	et cetera	and so on
viz.	/ˈvɪz/	videlicet	namely

Some abbreviations can be ambiguous, they can have different readings depending on the situational context in which they are used. Thus, the abbreviation *AA* may stand for one of the following phrases: *Alcoholics Anonymous*; *anti-aircraft*; *Architectural Association*; *Automobile Association*.

In some abbreviations one term is reduced to the initial letter, the other one undergoes regular clipping. Such reductions are meant to avoid confusion:

BLitt	<	Bachelor of Letters/ Literature
BSc	<	Bachelor of Science
PhD	<	(Lat.) <i>Philosophiae Doctor</i> , Doctor of Philosophy

The use of the full stop as a marker of abbreviation is subject to variation. However, its omission is more common in BrE than in AmE. Certain abbreviations can be encountered with different spellings: *PhD*, *Ph.D.*, *DPhil*, *B.Sc.* or *BSc*, *B.S.*, *BS*, and so on.

An increasing number of abbreviated terms have turned into acronyms, becoming established, institutionalised words. **Acronymization** turns phrases into initial letters of the words in those phrases and then interprets these initials phonologically. Thus, the phrase *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* provides the acronym *AIDS* (also *Aids*) which is pronounced as a regular word, not as a sequence of letters. Similar examples are:

NATO	/neɪtəʊ/	<	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UNESCO	/jʊˈneskəʊ/	<	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
scuba	/ˈsku:bə/	<	self-contained underwater breathing apparatus
radar	/ˈreɪdɑ:/	<	radar radio detection and ranging

Widespread use of electronic communication through mobile phones and the Internet during the 1990s allowed for a noticeable rise in colloquial abbreviation. Recent abbreviations are simply based on some very common phrase. This has become a main feature in text-messaging, also known as SMS (short message service) language. Some commonly used acronyms on texting are:

<i>b4</i>	<	before	<i>brb</i>	<	be right back
<i>gr8</i>	<	great	<i>idk</i>	<	I don't know
<i>lol</i>	<	laughing out loud	<i>ruok</i>	<	Are you ok?

In more recent times, the proliferation of initialisms and acronyms has been enhanced by the increasing number of computer abbreviations: e.g. *http* Hypertext Transfer Protocol, *DRAM* dynamic random-access memory, *CPU* Central Processing Unit.

Further reading

For further orthographic and phonetic properties of abbreviations, see Plag (2003: 126–129), Adams (2013: 141–143), and others.

Acronyms current in present-day American English can be found in *NTC's dictionary of acronyms and abbreviations* (1993). More comprehensive dictionaries of acronyms also include international and technical terms.

See also *Acronyms, initialisms & abbreviations dictionary* published by Gale. The 41st edition in 2009 lists over a million entries.

The online *Abbreviations and acronym finder* (www.acronymfinder.com/) boasts over 4,195,000 definitions in its database.

Self-assessed test 1.3.

- Trace back the origin of the clipped words below and explain how they are formed: *info*, *disco*, *van*, *limo*, *stereo*, *specs*.
- Give the full form of the following abbreviated words. Indicate their pronunciation as well: *E.F.L.*, *E.S.L.*, *K.O.*, *R.P.*, *ZIP (Code)*, *NASA*, *CIA*, *ESSE*, *FBI*, *FAQ*, *WYSWYG*, *atv*, *yuppie*, *woopie*.
- Match the following abbreviations, commonly used in the field of IT, with the full form:

BIOS
LAN

Microsoft Network
Random Access memory

RAM	Drive
DRV	local area network
MSN	Dynamic Data Exchange
INI	Basic Input/Output System
DDE	Initialisation

1.4. Conversion

Conversion (also known as **zero derivation**) is a word-building process which involves shifting a word from a word class into another word class, or to put it differently, changing the lexical category of a word. Conversion serves to coin new lexemes on the basis of existing ones. (cf. Bauer & Huddleston 2012: 1640–1644). Thus, the conversion of nouns to verbs is illustrated below:

bed	>	to bed	‘to put to bed’
bottle	>	to bottle	‘to put in a bottle’
bomb	>	to bomb	‘to throw bombs on’

Most cases of conversion involve nouns, verbs and adjectives. The input category can also be an adjective or a verb, while the output category is a verb or a noun, respectively:

Verb to noun conversion

V.	to crowd	>	N.	a crowd
	to cheat	>		a cheat
	to approach	>		an approach
	to laugh	>		a laugh

Noun to verb conversion

N.	echo	>	V.	to echo
	orphan	>		to orphan
	box	>		to box
	can	>		to can

Adjective to noun conversion

A.	poor	>	N.	the poor
	blind	>		the blind
	comic	>		a comic
	professional	>		a professional
	medical	>		a medical

Often the resulting noun is equivalent to a noun phrase consisting of an adjective + an understood noun, as in *medical* ('a medical examination'), *comic* ('person/periodical'), *regular* ('customer/soldier'). Some of these belong to informal style: *local* ('pub'), *royal* ('member of the royal family'). Other adjectives, related to time, like *daily*, *weekly*, *monthly*, convert to nouns denoting periodicals (*Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph*).

Adjective to verb conversion

A. clean	>	V. to clean
calm	>	to calm
dry	>	to dry
empty	>	to empty
smooth	>	to smooth

This pattern of conversion has been productive for a long time. The meaning of the resultant verb is to 'become ~,' or 'make ~,' e.g. *to calm* means 'to become calm,' *to clean* means 'to make sth. clean.'

Verbs resulting from conversion can be grouped according to the meaning of the noun. Thus, verbs may be converted from nouns that denote:

- parts of the body: *elbow* > *to elbow*, *eye* > *to eye*, *face* > *to face*
- human beings, family relationships and professions: *man* > *to man*, *father* > *to father*, *doctor* > *to doctor*
- animals and plants: *dog* > *to dog*, *flower* > *to flower*
- tools and weapons: *gun* > *to gun*, *pencil* > *to pencil*
- musical instruments: *trumpet* > *to trumpet*, *pipe* > *to pipe*
- an experience or a feeling: *pity* > *to pity*, *hunger* > *to hunger*
- production and reproduction: *copy* > *to copy*, *fax* > *to fax*
- location: *cage* > *to cage*, *garden* > *to garden*
- verbs denoting a period of time: *winter* > *to winter*, *honeymoon* > *to honeymoon*
- natural phenomena: *rain* > *to rain*
- liquids and substances: *milk* > *to milk*, *sugar* > *to sugar*
- computer jargon: *format* > *to format*, *interface* > *to interface*, *database* > *to database*
- removal or adding: *butter* > *to butter*, *dust* > *to dust*, *gas* > *to gas*

But how can the direction of conversion be established? How do we distinguish between the base word and the converted word? Plag (2003: 110–112) suggests the following criteria to determine the directionality of conversion:

- a. to look at the history of the language. The etymology of the word can be checked in an etymological dictionary. For instance, from the pair *crowd* and *to crowd*, historically, the verb was first attested in 937 (see *The Oxford English dictionary*). Later the verb was converted into a noun.
- b. to investigate the semantic complexity of the two words: the converted word is semantically more complex than the base word, or it is semantically dependent on the base, for instance, the noun *bottle* and the verb *to bottle*. The verb depends for its interpretation on the noun, *to bottle* means ‘to put in a bottle.’ The verb requires the existence of the concept of bottle. Similarly, the verb *to party* depends on the noun *party* (*to party* means ‘to have a party,’ while *party* means ‘a social occasion when people get together to have a good time’), so the noun *party* is the basic word.
- c. to examine the frequency of occurrence: the noun *water* is more frequent than the verb *to water*, which indicates that the base is the noun, similarly the verb *drink* is more frequent than the noun *drink*, showing that the noun is converted from the verb.

Thus, the problem of the directionality of conversion can be solved by combining historical, semantic and frequential evidence.

Productivity

The word-building process of conversion is extremely productive today (Minkova and Stockwell 2009: 9); we can *chair a meeting*, *air our opinions*, *stage a protest*, *e-mail the students*, *storm the gates*, *fish in troubled waters*, and so on. The most productive pattern in English is noun to verb conversion: *e-mail* > *to e-mail*, *google* > *to google*, *microwave* > *to microwave*, etc.

One kind of conversion that frequently results in a new lexeme is the **conversion of a proper name** (see section 1.8. on eponyms). This kind of conversion is often used to refer to an invention or discovery of the person whose name it is. The converted word occurs as a noun (*sandwich*, *watt*, *diesel*) or sometimes as a verb or adjective (*to dieselize*, *platonic*).

Another instance of this type of conversion is the use of the official trademark proper name of a company as a common noun (referring to all products of that type) or as a regular verb. Some famous cases are *Kleenex* for facial tissue, *Xerox* for photocopying (*I’ll be xeroxing in the library*). A recent one is the verb *to google*, meaning to execute an Internet search on a term, from the name of the dominant search engine, Google (*We googled the new applicant to check her background*).

Further reading

See also Plag (1983: §5.1.). More advanced reading in Lieber (2005: 418–422), Bauer (2005a) and Bauer & Valera (2005).

Self-assessed test 1.4.

1. Identify the converted word and the base word in the following pairs of examples:
 - a. *He majored in History.*
He graduated with a major in History.
 - b. *They e-mailed all students.*
They sent e-mails to all students.
 - c. *Demonstrators clashed with the police.*
There was a clash between the demonstrators and the police.
 - d. *He cleaned his shoes.*
His shoes were clean.
 - e. *He forgot to pickle the hamburger.*
He likes home made pickles.
 - f. *The committee laid the bill on the table.*
The committee tabled the bill.
2. Find the converted word and state what type of conversion it illustrates:
 - a. *I'll text her a message when I get home.*
 - b. *Where do the locals eat?*
 - c. *She bikes to school every day.*
 - d. *They usually have a fine-minute run before breakfast.*
 - e. *He calmed the excited dog.*
 - f. *The royals arrived in Canada.*
 - g. *One of our friends will join us for a chat.*
 - h. *He was a popular TV comic.*
 - i. *The two computer systems are able to interface with each other.*

1.5. Phonological modification

This word-building process involves shifting the stress in a word. This phenomenon is peculiar in words of Romance origin naturalized in English (borrowed and adapted to the language). Verbs and adjectives borrowed from Romance retained their original stress, while nouns came to have the

stress on the first syllable, as in Germanic languages. This fact brought with it a difference in stress between nouns on the one hand and verbs and adjectives on the other hand:

NOUN	VERB
`conduct	con`duct
`contract	con`tract
`convert	con`vert
`digest	di`gest
`export	ex`port
`increase	in`crease
`permit	per`mit
`project	pro`ject
`produce	pro`duce
`reject	re`ject
`subject	sub`ject
`survey	sur`vey

ADJECTIVE	VERB
`abstract	ab`stract
`perfect	per`fect
`present	pre`sent

Some pairs of words with identical spelling are differentiated not by stress, but by **vowel quality**:

V or N	compliment	document	implement
V or N	certificate	estimate	graduate
V or Adj	deliberate	legitimate	separate

The syllable *-ment* is pronounced /*ment*/ in the verb, /*mənt*/ in the noun. The suffix *-ate* is pronounced /*eit*/ in the verb and /*ət*/ in the noun or the adjective. In all examples the final vowel of the noun or adjective is reduced to /*ə*/ while the verb has an unreduced vowel or diphthong, in other words, the end part of the verb is phonologically stronger than that of nouns or adjectives (cf. Huddleston & Pullum 2012: 1638).

Thus, in English it is common to indicate the resultative nominalization by shifting the accent from the stem to the prefix. This process is still productive with verbs prefixed with *-re*: *re`make* (V)/`*remake* (N), *re`write* (V)/`*rewrite* (N).

Self-assessed test 1.5.

1. Illustrate phonological modification starting from the lexemes: *decrease, import, object, present, protest, rebel, suspect, torment*.

Indicate whether the two lexemes, the noun and the verb, identical in spelling, are differentiated by stress and vowel quality.

2. Read the following examples paying attention to the stressed syllable:

Those children are addicted to video games.

My grandfather is a jazz addict.

He has made rapid progress in maths.

Are you progressing in your piano studies?

They complimented the prince on the birth of his son.

He had never learned to receive a compliment gracefully.

The child drew a perfect circle.

You can perfect a painting with some additional brush strokes.

1.6. Blending

This word-formation process shares with truncations a loss of orthographic material. Blends (also called **telescope** or **portmanteau words**) are the fusion of the forms and meanings of two lexemes. They are words that combine two (or rarely three) words into one, deleting material from one or both source words. The structure of a blended compound may include: a whole word and a splinter (part of a morpheme) or two splinters (cf. Lehrer 2007: 117):

work	+	alcoholic	>	workaholic	(word + splinter)
chocolate	+	alcoholic	>	chocoholic	(splinter + splinter)

Blends may be the result of shortening existing compounds:

motor-camp	>	mocamp
science-fiction	>	sci-fi
motor-hotel	>	motel

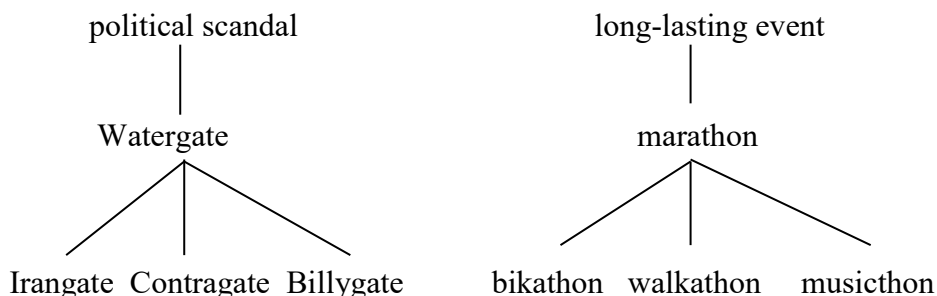
In these abbreviated compounds the first word functions as a modifier of the second: *a motor camp* is a camp for motorists.

Blends may be the outcome of shortening a combination of two base words:

breakfast	+	lunch	>	brunch
channel	+	tunnel	>	chunnel
Spanish	+	English	>	Spanglish
smoke	+	fog	>	smog

These blends share the properties of the referents of both elements: *brunch* is both breakfast and lunch, *smog* is both smoke and fog. It is always the initial part of the first word that combines with the final part of the second element.

A splinter that is frequently used may become a combining form. Combining forms are final like *-holic* in *workaholic*, *chocoholic* and initial like *e-* (*e-tail*). Other examples of final combining forms are: *-gate* meaning ‘political scandal’ found in *Irangate*, *Billygate*, *-thon* ‘long-lasting event’ in *bikathon*, *telethon*, *walkathon*, and *-ade* ‘fruit drink’ in *Powerade*, *limeade*. Lehrer (1998: 3) argues that the relation between blends (*Irangate*) and their source word (*Watergate*) is very often that between a hyponym and a superordinate (see section 3.3.1.):



The original word that gives rise to the new combining form (the splinter) becomes the superordinate of new formatives.

Besides combining forms in final position, there are also combining forms in initial position. Thus, critics of McDonald's Corporation have coined neologisms like *McGreedy*, *McGarbage*. *McJob* refers to low-paying employment with little chance of advancement. *McMansions* are large assembly-line houses in new developments.

Blends are very popular in journalism, advertising and technical fields (especially names) and tend to belong to a more informal stylistic level.

Further reading

More on blending in Lehrer (2007), Bauer & Huddleston (2012: §2.4.), Plag (2003: 121–126); for a review of the literature on blending, see Bauer (2012).

Self-assessed test 1.6.

1. Identify the stems in the following clipping compounds with a complete first stem and a clipped second stem: *cheeseburger*, *snowmobile*, *milkaholic*, *toytoon*.
2. Identify the stems of the following clipping compounds with a clipped first stem and a complete second stem: *biogas*, *e-commerce*, *e-security*, *eco-friendly*, *medicare*.
3. Find the blends with a complete first stem and a clipped second stem formed from the following:

<i>baby + kidnap</i>	<i>bold + audacious</i>
<i>slang + language</i>	<i>tank + bulldozer</i>
4. Give the blends with a clipped first stem and a complete second stem starting from the following:

<i>air + bus</i>	<i>electronic + cash</i>
<i>flexible + time</i>	<i>helicopter + skiing</i>
5. Find the blends with a clipped first stem and a clipped second stem, resulting from the following:

<i>fantastic + fabulous</i>	<i>European + bureaucrat</i>
<i>multiple + university</i>	<i>smoke + haze</i>
<i>television + broadcast</i>	<i>transmitter + receiver</i>

1.7. Back derivation

Back derivation or back formation, is the reverse of derivation. Derivation produces new words by adding affixes, while back derivation forms new words by deleting a final sequence of phonemes that seems to be a suffix. It is mainly involved in the derivation of verbs from nouns. There are two major sources of back-formation:

- (a) nouns (including compound nouns) ending in *-er/-or/-ar* or *-ing*
- (b) nouns ending in *-tion* or *-ion*.

Thus, agent nouns (i.e. nouns that denote the agent of an action) are the result of the derivation from verb stems by attaching the suffix *-er* (the arrow indicates the direction of derivation):

build	>	builder
work	>	worker
play	>	player

By analogy it was supposed that other agent nouns ending in *-er/ -or* also have corresponding verbal stems. The direction of derivation is from the noun to the verb:

to baby-sit	<	baby-sitter
to butch	<	butcher
to burgle	<	burglar
to sculpt	<	sculptor
to typewrite	<	typewrite
to edit	<	editor
to sightsee	<	sightseeing
to brainstorm	<	brainstorming
to brainwash	<	brainwashing

The misinterpretation of other noun forms ending in *-tion/-sion* enlarged the number of verbs coined by back-formation:

to electrocute	<	electrocution
to legislate	<	legislation
to assassinate	<	assassination
to televise	<	television
to transfuse blood	<	blood transfusion

Miscellaneous examples of back derivation are:

to enthuse	<	enthusiasm
to diagnose	<	diagnosis
to reminisce	<	reminiscence

This word-formation process based on shortening is especially favoured by speakers of American English.

In short, back derivation is a process of forming new words by clipping already existing words. The new words are formed by misunderstanding the structure of the word. This misinterpretation is due to analogy and ignorance of the etymology of the word (cf. Adams 2013: 136–138).

Many back-formations never gain real legitimacy (e.g., *enthuse*, *elocute*), some are aborted early in their existence (e.g., *ebullit*, *frivol*), others have a jocular effect (in AmE), as do *burgle*, *effuse*, *emote*, *laze*, and others. Still, many examples have survived respectably, among them *collide*, *diagnose*, *donate*, *edit*, *elide*, *grovel*, *orate*, *peeve*, *resurrect*, and *sculpt* (cf. Garner 2003).

Self-assessed test 1.7.

Compare the words in the two columns below. Comment on their formation, pointing out the original word and the derived one:

<i>to automate</i>	<i>automation</i>
<i>greed</i>	<i>greedy</i>
<i>to housekeep</i>	<i>housekeeper</i>
<i>to sleepwalk</i>	<i>sleep-walking</i>
<i>to thought-read</i>	<i>thought-reading</i>

1.8. Eponymy

Eponyms are new words based on names of real people, imaginary or mythological creatures or places (see Minkova and Stockwell 2009: 19–22).

Eponyms based on names of real people:

<i>cardigan</i>	(19th century Earl of Cardigan, a style of waistcoat that he favoured)
<i>diesel</i>	(Rudolf Diesel, German mechanical engineer, inventor of the the internal combustion engine that uses crude oil in the 1890s)
<i>leotard</i>	(Jules Leotard, French acrobat, who in the late 1800s, often performed in a skin-tight one-piece body suit)
<i>mesmerize</i>	(Franz Anton Mesmer, a German physician of the late 1700s, famous for his theory of animal magnetism)
<i>nicotine</i>	(Jacques Nicot introduced tobacco in France in 1560)
<i>sandwich</i>	(18th century the Earl of Sandwich, British nobleman, who brought bread and meat together to the gambling table)

Eponyms based on names of mythological characters:

- atlas* (Atlas, a Greek god)
morphine (Morpheus, the Greek god of sleep and of dreams)

Eponyms based on geographical names:

- jeans* (from the Italian city of Genoa, where the cloth was first made)
cheddar (a village in Somerset where cheese was produced)

The number of eponyms in scientific language is very large, since new discoveries are often named after their discoverers, for instance in chemistry, newly discovered elements: *Einsteinium* (Es), *Mendelevium* (Md), *Nobelium* (No), etc.; in physics *ohm*, *ampere*, *watt*, *roentgen*, *hertz*, *joule*, *faraday*; in medical English, procedures, instruments, symptoms and techniques have been named after the persons who first discovered a disease.

The main word-formation processes involved in the production of eponyms are: conversion, suffixation, composition.

Conversion produces the largest number of non-terminological eponyms. The input units are exclusively proper nouns and, typically, conversion produces common nouns: *béchamel*, *biro*, *casanova*, *macadam*, *praline*, *shrapnel*. The output units have the potential of becoming input bases in further processes of word-formation: *boycotter*; *dieseling*, *dieselize*, *dieselization*; *ohmic*; *Shylockian*, *Shylocky*, *to shylock*, *shylocker*. (cf. Lalić 2004: 64–65)

Suffixation is the most productive process, particularly in scientific terminology, notably in biology, chemistry and mineralogy. Most eponyms derived by suffixation are names of plants, bacteria, chemical substances and minerals:

- ite: minerals: *allanite*, *dawsonite*, *fergusonite*, *pickeringite*
- ia: plants: *begonia*, *dahlia*, *gardenia*
- ium: chemical elements: *curium*, *einsteinium*, *rutherfordium*
- ize: to subject to a process: *galvanize*, *mesmerize*, *pasteurize*
- ism: principles, doctrines or practices: *Buddhism*, *Calvinism*, *chauvinism*, *Darwinism*
- ic: in the style of: *Platonic*, *pyrrhic*, *quixotic*, *Sapphic*

Composition is very frequent and productive. Here are some examples: *loganberry*, *youngberry*, *saxophone*, *daguerreotype*. (cf. Lalić 2004: 66)

New eponyms are being formed all the time as there seem to be no restrictions on the productivity of eponymous formations. Theoretically, any personal name can be used as a common noun, but many of these never become established.

Further reading

More on word-formation processes involved in eponymy in Lalić (2004). For eponyms in specialised languages, see, for instance, dictionaries of medical eponyms: Rodin and Key (1989), Firkin and Whitworth (2001).

Self-assessed test 1.8.

1. Identify the suffixes involved in the formation of the following eponyms: *einsteinium*, *Benedictine*, *Kafkaesque*, *Clintonite*, *rutherfordium*, *Rappist*, *Ursuline*, *daltonism*, *Hussite*, *masochism*, *sadism*, *Blairist*, *Robinsonesque*, *fuchsia*.
2. Search the internet for the story behind the following eponyms, or look up the eponyms in Manser's dictionary (1998): *maverick*, *boycott*, *poinsettia* (a Christmas plant), *Alzheimer's disease*, *biro*, *clementine*, *diesel*, *saxophone*.

1.9. Reanalysis

Reanalysis is a type of blending that involves **resegmentation** of a word. In reanalysis words receive a different structural analysis: a derived word is reanalysed as a compound and then a part of this compound (a splinter) is involved in the formation of new compounds.

The classical example is the resegmentation of the word *hamburger*, which initially meant a special kind of food originating from the German town of Hamburg. The noun was derived in compliance with the rules of suffixation in German, namely, to indicate the origin of something, the suffix *-er* is attached to the name of the town. However, speakers of English, unaware of the origin of this word, recognizing the stem *ham*, reinterpreted the word as a compound of *ham* and *burger*:

[Hamburg] -er	>	[ham + burger]	>	beef + burger
derived word		compound-like word		compound
derivation	→	resegmentation	→	compounding

The reanalysed structure serves as a model to produce new words: *beefburger*, *cheeseburger*, *fishburger*, *chickenburger*, *veggieburger*, *beefburger*, *oysterburger*, etc. Thus, *burger* has been reinterpreted as a noun (as in *Burger King*). It is not a suffix, but a noun used as a head of nominal compounds, meaning a special kind of food.

A similar type of reanalysis is shown in *turkeyfurter* from *frankfurter*:

[Frankfurt] -er	>	[frank + furter]	>	turkey + furter
derived word		compound-like		compound
derivation	→	resegmentation	→	compounding

Such compound-like words based on blending enter the English language as neologisms. (cf. Szymanek 2005: 435)

1.10. Reduplication

In **reduplication** new words are made by doubling a stem, either without any phonetic changes, as in *bye-bye*, or with variation of the root vowel or consonant, as in *ping-pong*, *chitchat* (this second type is called **gradational reduplication**) (cf. Katamba and Stonham 2006: 177; Matthews 2007: 337).

Reduplication produces **pseudo-compounds** that can be grouped according to the criterion of form into: reduplicative compounds proper, ablaut combinations and rhyme combinations.

In the case of **reduplicative compounds proper** (or **exact reduplication**), the base (or the reduplicant) is fully repeated, as in *bye-bye*. Most examples are illustrative of the so-called baby talk: *choo-choo*, *night-night*, *no-no*, *pee-pee*, *poo-poo*.

Ablaut reduplication consists in changes in the root vowel: *bric-a-brac*, *criss-cross*, *dilly-dally*, *ding-dong*, *flim-flam*, *kitty-cat*, *knick-knack*, *jibber-jabber*, *mish-mash*, *ping-pong*, *pitter-patter*, *riff-raff*, *see-saw*, *shilly-shally*, *tick-tock*, *tittle-tattle*, *wishy-washy*.

Rhyme combinations involve the shifting of a consonant, to form some special rhyme: *chick-flick*, *chock-a-block*, *claptrap*, *gang-bang*, *fuddy-duddy*, *fuzzy-wuzzy*, *hanky-panky*, *happy-clappy*, *arum-scarum*, *higgledy-piggledy*, *hob-nob*, *hobson-jobson*, *hocus-pocus*, *hodge-podge*, *hoity-toity*, *hokey-pokey*, *hubble-bubble*, *hurly-burly*, *itsy-bitsy/itty-bitty*, *jeepers-creepers*, *lardy-dardy*, *lovey-dovey*, *nitty-gritty*, *okey-dokey*, *pell-mell*, *razzle-dazzle*, *rumpy-pumpy*, *shilly-shally*, *slim-jim*, *super-duper*, *teenie-weenie*, *tilly-nilly*, *toogie-woogie*, *topsy-turvy*, *walkie-talkie*, *wingding*.

In other words, repetition of the bases in compounds of this kind involves copying the rhyme in the rhyme motivated compounds, and

copying the consonants and altering the vowel in ablaut motivated compounds. This type of word-building is greatly facilitated in modern English by the vast number of monosyllables (cf. Antrushina 1999: 118).

Stylistically speaking, most words made by reduplication represent informal groups: colloquialisms and slang. e. g. *walkie-talkie* ('a portable radio'), *riff-raff* ('the worthless or disreputable element of society'; 'the dregs of society'), *chi-chi* (sl. for *chic* as in a *chi-chi girl*).

Further reading

On reduplication, as phonologically motivated compounding, see Bauer & Huddleston (2002: 1666) and Bauer (1983).

Self-assessed test 1.10

1. Comment on and classify the following pseudo-compounds according to the form into reduplicative compounds proper, ablaut combinations or rhyme combinations:
 - a. Inge's sugary words, her Scandinavian *sing-song* flowed back through his memories.
 - b. He wanted to say, '*Fiddle-de-dee*,' had he not known that Gordon, in less ridiculous words, would have shared Else's feelings.
 - c. I've got a mortal dislike of *crunchings and munchings* and all such noise, it's my one little *fiddle-faddle*.
 - d. You haven't heard *boogie-woogie* till you've heard him.
 - e. Let's get down to *the nitty-gritty*; *the nitty-gritties* of the negotiations.
 - f. The hotel we stayed in was absolutely *tip-top*.
 - g. Oh, *honeybunny*, we need to leave now.
 - h. Time for bed, children! Okay, Mom, *night-night*!
 - i. Why is there such *hugger-mugger* about the project?
 - j. The rain *pitter-pattered* on the roof.
2. Consider the following reduplicatives. Group them in word classes and comment on other word-formation processes involved in their production. Match the reduplicatives with their meanings:

bric-a-brac, n.

chitchat, n.

claptrap, n.

dilly-dally, v.

din-din, n.

higgledy-piggledy, adv.

<i>hugger-mugger</i> , n.	<i>humdrum</i> , adj.	<i>hurly-burly</i> , n.
<i>knick-knack</i> , n.	<i>mish-mash</i> , n.	<i>pitter-patter</i> , adv.
<i>teeny-weeny</i> , adj.	<i>wiggle-waggle</i> , v.	<i>willy-nilly</i> , adv.
<i>wishy-washy</i> , adj.		

- a. conversation about things that are not important.
- b. stupid talk that has no value
- c. confused mixture of different kinds of things, styles, etc.
- d. ornaments and other small decorative objects of little value
- e. very small, or connected with teenagers
- f. 1) secrecy; 2) confusion
- g. to make something move from one side to another or up and down
- h. 1) a rapid series of light tapping sound; 2) make or move with a series of light tapping sounds
- i. in an untidy way that lacks any order
- j. to take a long time to do something, especially to make a decision
- k. 1) whether one wants to or not; 2) carelessly, without planning
- l. dinner
- m. 1) not having clear or firm ideas or beliefs; 2) not bright in colour
- n. a small decorative object in a house.
- o. a very noisy and busy activity or situation
- p. boring and always the same

Further reading on word-formation processes

General introductions to word-formation processes in English can be found in Adams (2013), Lieber (2010: ch.3), Minkova and Stockwell (2009: 7–23), Brinton and Brinton (2010), Finegan (2012: ch.2), among others.

For a diachronic approach to English word-formation processes, see Marchand (1969) and Hughes (2000).

More detailed treatments of words and word structure can be found in Plag (2003) and Katamba (1994); a recent survey in Bauer & Huddleson (2012: 1621–1721). For a wider view of compounds, looking beyond the English language, see Bauer (2001). Advanced reading on word-formation processes in Lieber (2005).

On the productivity of lexeme-formation processes, see Lieber (2010: ch. 4).

Self-assessed test on word-formation. Revision.

The following terms are associated with computer or internet use. For each item, identify its lexical category and comment upon the word-formation process (compounding, derivation, shortening/ clipping, acronymization,

conversion, blend, reduplication, etc.) and provide a brief definition, if possible:

cyberenthusiast, cyberspace, FAQ, to e-mail, smileys, software, to download, browser, keyboard, cluelessness, electronic commerce, mumbo-jumbo, zig-zag

Example: *chatgroup* – noun, compound,
‘a group of people talking together via the Internet.’

Summary

The chapter opened with a discussion of the definition of the word. We distinguished between word forms and lexemes. Word forms are concrete words occurring in speech and writing (*plays, playing, played*), while lexemes are abstract dictionary items like *play*.

The next section introduced the segmentation of words into morphemes, the smallest abstract units of meaning or grammatical function.

Then we have provided an account of the major word-formation processes in the English language, affixation and compounding. Both derived words and compounds have an internal structure that may be visually represented in the form of tree diagrams. Compounds may be attributive, coordinative, or subordinative, and within these categories compounds may be further analysed as endocentric or exocentric. We have also looked at conversion, a shift in the category of a lexeme with no change other than an occasional change of stress.

Less traditional word-building processes include clipping, which is often accompanied by blending, initialisms, acronyms and back-formation, which add to the lexical stock of present-day English.

Throughout the chapter, we have highlighted issues related to the productivity of word-formation processes and we have supplied information concerning online resources for study.

2. Word origin

In this chapter, we will highlight the importance of studying the history of words. Against the background of a brief outline of the history of the English language, we will learn about the sources of much of the present-day English vocabulary, about the effects of language contact on the evolution of the language. Over the centuries, the extensive borrowing of lexical items from other languages into English, as well as the on-going process of creating new words have greatly contributed to the constantly evolving nature of the English vocabulary.

2.1. The native stock of words

The vocabulary of the English language is far from being homogeneous. It consists of two layers – the native stock of words and the borrowed stock of words.

The native words belong to the original English stock, as known from the earliest available manuscripts of the Old English period. The native words are further subdivided into those of the Indo-European stock and those of Common Germanic origin.

The oldest layer is that of the words having cognates in the vocabularies of different **Indo-European languages**. It has been noticed that they fall into definite semantic groups, such as: terms of kinship: *father, mother, son, daughter, brother*; words naming objects and phenomena of nature: *sun, moon, star, wind, water, wood, hill, stone, tree*; names of animals and birds: *bull, cat, crow, goose, wolf*; parts of the human body: *arm, ear, eye, foot, heart*, etc. Some of the most frequent verbs are also of the Indo-European common stock: *bear, come, sit, stand* and others. The adjectives of this group denote concrete physical properties: *hard, quick, slow, red, white*. Most numerals also belong here.

A noticeably greater part of the native vocabulary layer is formed by words of the **Common Germanic stock**, i.e. of words having parallels in German, Norwegian, Dutch, Icelandic, etc. It contains a greater number of semantic groups and it includes: nouns like *summer, winter, storm, house, room, coal, shirt, shoe, care, evil, hope, life, need, rest*; verbs: *bake, burn, buy, drive, hear, keep, learn, make, meet, rise, see, send, shoot* and many more; adjectives: *broad, dead, deaf, deep*; and many adverbs and pronouns (see section 2.2.).

Words belonging to the native word-stock occur in a wide range of patterns, have a high frequency and are highly polysemantic; they are often monosyllabic and productive in forming new words and set expressions. For example, *watch* < OE *waecan* is one of the 500 most frequent English words. It may be used as a verb in different sentence patterns or as a noun; as a stem in derived words (*watcher*, *watchful*, *watchfulness*), in compounds (*watch-out*, *watchword*, *watch-dog*), or in set expressions (*be on the watch*, *watch one's step*, *keep watch*, *watchful as a hawk*), etc.

Numerically the native stock of words comprises only 30 % of the total number of words in the English vocabulary, while up to 70% of the English vocabulary consist of loanwords.

2.1.1. Etymology and onomastics

Etymology is the study of the origin of words. The term *etymology* derives from the Greek root *etymos*, meaning 'true.' In linguistics, the term **etymon** is used to refer to a word or morpheme from which a later word is derived. For example, the Latin word *candidus*, which means 'white,' is the etymon of the English word *candid*; or, the Greek *oktopous* is the etymon of the English word *octopus*.

Etymology can trace the history of words, the changes in form and meaning, it can tell whether the word is native or borrowed. For instance, the adjective *sad* is an Old English word that originally had the meaning 'satisfied.' The meaning 'sorrowful' was first recorded before 1300. Its spelling underwent changes: Old English *sead* > Middle English *sad* > Modern English *sad*. Another example is the adjective *anguished*, borrowed from Old French, early in the 14th c. The adjective *sad* is a word of Germanic origin, while the adjective *anguished* is of Romance origin.

Etymology plays an important part in the history of names, i.e. those words or phrases that uniquely identify persons (*The Beatles*), animals, places (*London*), concepts or things (cf. Crystal 1995: 140–155; Durkin 2009: ch. 9). Thus, for instance, several place names in Britain are of ancient Celtic origin (*Thames*, *Avon*) or of Roman origin (notably place names including: *-port*, *-chester* or *street* (*Davenport*, *Manchester*, *Colchester*, *Stratford*); other places have become known by the family of the tribal group that would settle in a locality (*Reading* 'place of Reada's people,' *Dagenham* 'Dacca's homestead') and the largest number of place names relate to topography, i.e. they include nouns denoting hills, valleys, rivers, woods, fields (*Windhill*, *Redcliff*, *Hazelwood*). Similarly, the etymology of the county names in Britain reveals their Anglo-Saxon

origins: *Norfolk* ‘people living in the north,’ *Suffolk* ‘people living in the south,’ *Essex* ‘territory of the East Saxons,’ etc.

Family names can be grouped etymologically into: names derived from a place (*Wood, Street*) or from an occupation (*Cook, Clark, Smith*), names expressing kinship (*Johnson, Watkins, Robertson*) and nicknames related to a physical or moral feature (*Long, Little, Fox, Brown, Young, Rich*).

2.1.2. Semantic change

Etymology is essential in studying the changes in the meaning of the words. The meaning of the words borrowed into English from Latin or Greek can differ from their modern meaning. Semantic change is possible because human beings have the capability to form associations between different concepts, mainly based on metaphor and metonymy.

The **metaphorical shift** involves an association between concepts based on resemblance: the Greek word *galact* meaning ‘milk’ is the etymon of *galaxy* and *galactic*. The metaphor lying behind this semantic change is that centuries ago people thought that the stars looked like milk spilled across the sky and created the word *galaxy* to refer to these stars.

The **metonymic shift** involves an association based simply on a close connection in every day experience, such as: a container – content relation (*bottle > coke; can > juice*), a whole – part relation (*car > wheels; house > roof*) or a representative – symbol relationship (*king > crown; the president > The White House*). For instance, in the Old English period, the horns of animals were used for making musical instruments. Because of this close association between the musical instrument and the material out of which the instrument was made, a shift of meaning took place and *horn* became the name of the musical instrument itself.

When a semantic shift occurs, the meaning of the word undergoes narrowing, widening, amelioration or degeneration (cf. Denning et al 2007; Durkin 2009: ch. 8; Harley 2006: §4.8).

a. Narrowing (also specialisation)

A lexeme with a broad, general meaning may become restricted or specialised in meaning; for instance, the Greek morpheme *bibl* originally meant ‘book.’ It preserved this general meaning in *bibliography, bibliophile* but it also refers to a specific book *The Christian Bible* in words such as *biblical*.

A similar example is the narrowing of *deer* from ‘animal’ in Old English to ‘deer,’ a particular type of animal, in Middle English. This happened

because in the Middle English period, the French borrowing *beast* came to be commonly used for the meaning ‘animal,’ and *deer* came to be restricted to its current meaning. (Later on, the word *animal* was borrowed from Latin, with its modern meaning, and pushed *beast* into a narrower meaning as well.) (cf. Harley 2006)

Likewise, *meat* shows a slow process of change in its history within the English language from ‘food in general’ to ‘flesh of an animal (as food)’ and *knight* from ‘boy, lad’ in Old English to a mounted soldier serving under a feudal ruler in Middle English.

b. Widening (also extension, generalisation)

A lexeme with a narrow, specialised meaning may acquire a more general meaning. The Latin word *toxicum* ‘poisoned by arrow’ is the etymon of the word *toxin*, with a widened meaning including all kinds of poison.

Similarly, the word *bird* (of OE origin) used to mean just ‘young fowl,’ but it gradually came to have its broader, modern meaning, which includes all fowl both young and old. Similarly, *manage* (of Middle Italian origin) used to mean specifically ‘handle a horse,’ but now it means handling anything difficult successfully.

Related to broadening is **bleaching**, where the semantic content of a word becomes reduced as the grammatical content increases, for instance in the development of intensifiers from adverbs such as *awfully*, *terribly*, *horribly* (e.g. *awfully late*, *awfully big*, *awfully small*) or *pretty* (e.g. *pretty good*, *pretty bad*) (Durkin 2009: §8.6).

c. Amelioration

A lexeme with an unpleasant meaning may get in time a neutral or a positive meaning. For instance, the Latin morpheme *dexter* ‘on the right’ with a neuter meaning, has come to have a positive connotation in words like *dexterity* and *dexterous* ‘skill’ or ‘cleverness.’

The adjective *nice* has undergone amelioration; it used to have the negative meaning ‘stupid, simple,’ and now it means ‘nice.’ *Fond* underwent a similar change: in Shakespeare’s time, it meant ‘foolish, crazy, dazed’; over time it came to mean ‘dazed with love.’ From there it just came to mean ‘in love with’ and then ‘affectionate towards,’ losing the negative sense entirely.

Hyperbole may lie at the basis of amelioration. The earliest meaning of *awesome* was ‘inspiring awe, dreadful.’ Today, *awesome* has become a word descriptive of wonderful things. According to *The Oxford English dictionary*, this meaning is first found in the 1980s. Similarly, the word

terrific used to mean ‘causing terror,’ now it means just the opposite of what it once meant.

Words which describe things as being very good or very bad are often words which change their meanings rapidly, because overuse of a particular word makes it feel weak and a new hyperbole is required.

d. Degeneration (also pejoration)

A lexeme may develop a negative sense of disapproval. For example, the Latin word *sinister* ‘on the left’ was neutral in meaning, but over time it came to mean ‘evil.’ Another example is the word *silly* which meant ‘happy’ or ‘blessed’ in Old English. In Middle English, the meaning changed to ‘innocent,’ then ‘feeble-minded’ or ‘ignorant.’ Today it means ‘foolish.’

Generally speaking, semantic changes are often the outcome of a mental association, usually involving metaphor (resemblance) or metonymy. Semantic changes can also be characterised in terms of their consequences. Narrowing or specialisation takes place when the meaning becomes more specific, and widening or generalisation is the reverse. Melioration happens when a word takes on more positive connotations, and pejoration is the opposite.

Further reading

For the study of the origin and development of words, see Durkin (2009). Ayto’s (2005) dictionary reveals the historical links between English words.

The best place to learn more about the etymology of English words, and even to discover new connections between words, is in the pages (printed or electronic) of historical and etymological dictionaries, such as: *The Oxford dictionary of English etymology* (1966), *The Oxford English dictionary* (1994), *The Middle English dictionary* (1952–2001) (online version: *Middle English compendium*: <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/mec/>) and as an online resource, see also *Online etymology dictionary* (<http://www.etymonline.com>).

Self-assessed test 2.1.

1. Use the *Online Etymology dictionary* to trace back the origin of each word in the sentence: *The King of England wrote poems*.
Example: *the* = definite article, late Old English *þe*
2. Decide whether the result of the semantic shift is narrowing, degeneration, widening, or amelioration:
 - a. OE *mete* ‘any food’ > ModE *meat* ‘animal flesh’

- b. OE *bouchier* ‘one who slaughters goats’ > ModE *butcher* ‘one who slaughters animals’
 - c. OE *steorfan* ‘to die (of any cause)’ > ModE *starve* ‘to die from hunger’
 - d. ME *vilein* ‘feudal serf, farmer’ > ModE *villain* ‘a wicked or evil person’
 - e. ME *marshall* ‘groom for horses’ (literally ‘horse slave’) > ModE *marshall* ‘high ranking office’
3. Trace back the semantic change undergone by the words:
fair, fear, fowl, bird, lord, silly.
 4. Look up the following words in an etymological dictionary or search online at: [<http://www.dictionary.com>] to find out whether they are of native, Anglo-Saxon origin, or of foreign origin:

happy, easy, comfortable, able, rest, conquer, moderate

2.2. The borrowed stock of words

Loanwords (or **borrowings**) are words adopted by the speakers of one language (*borrowing language*) from a different language (*source/donor language*). Words may be directly borrowed from another language (e.g. the English word *omelette* was borrowed from French *omelette*), or indirectly, when a word is passed from one language to another, and then to another [e.g. *kahveh* (Turkish) > *kahva* (Arabic) > *koffie* > (Dutch) > *coffee* (English)]. If a word is directly borrowed the chances of its undergoing radical phonological modification are significantly less than those of a word that is indirectly borrowed. Besides changes in phonemic shape, a borrowed word may also undergo modification in spelling, paradigm or meaning according to the standards of the English language.

Borrowing is a consequence of cultural contact between two language communities. Borrowing of words can go in both directions between the two languages in contact, but often there is an asymmetry, such that more words go from one side to the other. In this case, the source language community has some advantage of power, prestige and/or wealth. For example, the Germanic tribes in the first few centuries A.D. adopted numerous loanwords from Latin as they adopted new products via trade with the Romans. Few Germanic words, on the other hand, passed into Latin.

The actual process of borrowing is complex. Generally, some speakers of the borrowing language know the source language, too. They use words from the source language in everyday situations. In time, more speakers become familiar with a new foreign word. The new word becomes conventionalised, i.e., part of the conventional ways of speaking in the borrowing language. At this point the word is called a **borrowing** or a **loanword**.

Conventionalisation is a gradual process in which a word becomes more familiar to more people. The newly borrowed word gradually adopts the sound and the inflections of the borrowing language as speakers who do not know the source language accommodate the loanwords to their native language. Borrowed words may also form compounds or derivatives in the borrowing language. In time, people in the borrowing community do not perceive the word as a loanword at all. (cf. Durkin 2009)

English has gone through many periods in which large numbers of words were borrowed from other languages. These periods coincide with times of major cultural contact between English speakers and those speaking other languages.

2.2.1. Major periods of borrowing

The early political history of England is one of repeated conquest and subordination. These political events brought about radical changes in the language between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1500, a span of time in which Modern English was created out of Old English.

The language spoken by the inhabitants of the British Isles before the Roman conquest of Britain in A.D. 43 belonged to the Celtic family. Latin did not replace the Celtic language in Britain, but there were certainly many people in Roman Britain who habitually spoke Latin. By 410 the Roman occupation had come to an end. In mid-5th century the country was invaded and settled by the Germanic tribes known as the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, who spoke Germanic dialects. The earliest form of English, Old English, developed from these dialects.

I. Old English Period (450–1100)

Words of Latin and Celtic origin were borrowed into the vernacular during the Old English period. The greatest influence of Latin upon Old English was occasioned by the introduction of Christianity into Britain in A.D. 597. Churches and monasteries were built and schools were established in most

of them. A few words related to church and its services were borrowed at this time.

Latin borrowings into Old English:

- OE. *apostol* 'apostle, messenger' (Lat. *apostolus* < Gr. *apostolos*)
- OE. *casere* 'emperor'
- OE. *ceaster* 'city' (Lat. *castra* 'camp')
- OE. *maegester* 'master' (Lat. *magister*)
- OE. *martyr* 'martyr' (Late Latin *martyr* < Gr. *martyr*)

After the conquest of the Celtic population by the Anglo-Saxons few Celtic words survived in the language chiefly in place and river names, for instance: the kingdom of *Kent* owes its name to the Celtic word *Canti* or *Cantion*, the name *London* most likely goes back to a Celtic designation, *York* was originally a Celtic word; *Thames*, *Avon* and other river names are of Celtic origin (cf. Baugh & Cable 1993: 72–104). A few ordinary words were learnt by the Anglo-Saxons through every day contact with the natives: *binn* ('basket, crib'), *bratt* ('cloak'), and *brocc* ('brock or badger'), geographical names: *crag*, *luh* ('lake'), *cumb* ('valley') and *torr* ('projecting rock'). The influence of the Celtic was negligible, because the relation of the Celt to the Anglo-Saxon was that of a submerged race, not able to make any notable contribution to the Anglo-Saxon civilization.

Scandinavian borrowings

At the end of the 8th century, Scandinavians ('Vikings') began raids on England, followed later by settlement. Many place names, personal names, and general vocabulary from Scandinavian languages (Danish and Norwegian dialects) were borrowed during the period of the Danelaw (9th–10th centuries). However most of the loanwords from Scandinavian first appeared in the written language in Middle English. The Scandinavian words that entered the English language are related to everyday life: *anger*, *cake*, *call*, *egg*, *fellow*, *gear*, *get*, *give*, *hit*, *husband*, *kick*, *kill*, *kilt*, *kindle*, *law*, *low*, *lump*, *raise*, *scorch*, *score*, *scrape*, *scrub*, *seat*, *skill*, *skin*, *skirt*, *sky*, *sly*, *take*, *they*, *them*, *their*, *ugly*, *want*, *window*, *wing*.

Many place-names of Scandinavian origin typically end in: *-by*, *-thorpe* ('village'), *-thwaite* ('an isolated piece of land'), *-toft* ('a piece of ground'): *Whitby*, *Westby*, *Linthorp*, *Bishopsthorp*, *Applethwaite*, *Brimtoft*, *Langtoft*.

II. Middle English Period (1100–1500)

French borrowings

The Norman invasion of 1066 provided the impetus for an influx of vocabulary from Anglo-Norman, the dialect of Old French spoken in England by the new ruling classes. This infusion laid the basis for the hybrid English language of today. English borrowed lots of words related to:

- Law and government: *attorney, chancellor, country, court, crime, defendant, evidence, government, jail, judge, jury, noble, parliament, plea, prison, revenue, state, tax, verdict*;
- Church: *abbot, chaplain, chapter, clergy, friar, prayer, preach, priest, religion, saint, sermon*;
- Nobility: *baron, baroness; count, countess; duke, duchess; marquis, marquess; prince, princess; viscount, viscountess; noble, royal* (in contrast with the native words: *king, queen, earl, lord, lady, knight*);
- Military: *army, artillery, battle, captain, company, defence, enemy, marine, navy, sergeant, soldier, volunteer*;
- Cooking: *beef, boil, broil, butcher, dine, fry, mutton, pork, poultry, roast, salmon, stew, veal*;
- Culture and luxury goods: *art, bracelet, clarinet, dance, diamond, fashion, fur, jewel, painting, satin, ruby, sculpture*;
- Other: *adventure, change, charge, courage, devout, dignity, enamour, fruit, letter, literature, magic, male, female, mirror, pilgrimage, question, regard, special*.

The French borrowings in the Middle English period also include a huge number of words ending in *-age, -ance/ -ence, -ant/ -ent, -ity, -ment, -tion* or prefixed by *con-, de-,* and *pre-*.

Sometimes it is hard to tell whether a given word came from French or whether it was taken directly from Latin. Words for which this difficulty occurs are those in which there were no special sound and/or spelling changes of the sort that distinguished French from Latin.

French and Latin were used in written documents and spoken in official contexts. The clerks who drafted and copied records all day in Latin and French were mostly speakers of English and moved freely from one

language to another according to the nature of their work and the company in which they found themselves.

The variety of French that emerged in England and was in use for several centuries was **Anglo-French**, the lexis of which showed numerous lexical and semantic differences from the French spoken on the continent. In the late Middle English period, and especially in the early 15th century, the use of (Anglo-)French within England showed considerable decline (cf. Durkin 2009: ch. 5).

III. Early Modern English Period (1500–1650)

The Renaissance brought about the beginnings of a huge influx of Latin and Greek words, many of them learned words imported by scholars proficient in those languages (cf. Minkova and Stockwell 2009: ch.3). Scholars conducted academic work in a form of Latin known as Neo-Latin, or Renaissance Latin. To a well-educated Renaissance person Latin was like a second language. Classical Greek was another source of learned words during this period, though the path of entry of Greek words into English is very often indirect, through the vocabulary of Latin or French.

Latin loanwords:

- *abdomen, anatomy, area, compensate, discuss, disc/disk, excavate, expensive, fictitious, gradual, habitual, insane, meditate, notorious, peninsula, physician;*

Greek loanwords (many of these indirect, via Latin):

- *anonymous, atmosphere, autograph, catastrophe, climax, comedy, critic, data, history, pneumonia, tragedy;*
- Greek bound morphemes: *-ism, -ize.*

Arabic loanwords (indirect borrowings from the Arabic of the Moors occupying Spain in the Middle Ages into Spanish and then passed over to French and English):

- via Spanish: *algebra, zenith, algorithm, almanac, alchemy, admiral;*
- via other Romance languages: *orange, sugar, zero, coffee;*

IV. Modern English (1650 to the present)

This has been a period of major colonial expansion, industrial and technological revolution, and American immigration.

Words from European languages

French continues to be the largest single source of new words outside of very specialised vocabulary domains (scientific/technical vocabulary, still dominated by classical borrowings).

- high culture: *ballet, champagne, chic, cognac*;
- war and military: *brigade, battalion, cavalry, grenade, infantry*.

Spanish

- *alligator, canyon, embargo, guitar, marijuana, mosquito, ranch, tornado*.

Italian

- *arsenal, balcony, broccoli, macaroni, motto, piano, opera, soprano, opera, stanza, studio, umbrella, viola, violin*;
- from Italian American immigrants: *cappuccino, espresso, pasta, pizza, ravioli, spaghetti, zucchini*.

Dutch, Flemish

- shipping, naval terms: *commodore, cruise, dock, freight, leak, reef, skipper, smuggle, yacht*;
- art: *easel, landscape, sketch*;
- food and drink: *booze, brandy(wine), cookie, cranberry, gin, waffle*.

German

- *noodle, sauerkraut, schnitzel*;
- 20th century German loanwords: *blitzkrieg, zeppelin, U-boat, delicatessen, hamburger, frankfurter, kindergarten, (apple) strudel*.

Words from non-European languages

English speakers have always adopted loanwords from the languages of whatever cultures they have come into contact with. Following increasing interaction with peoples from outside Europe from the 16th century onwards, many words were borrowed from their languages. Here is a short list of words borrowed from languages spoken in other parts of the world:

Hindi

- *bungalow, jungle, pyjamas, punch (the drink), shampoo*.

African languages

- *banana* (via Portuguese), *banjo*, *gorilla*, *jazz*, *zebra*, *zombie*.

American Indian languages

- *avocado*, *cacao*, *cannibal*, *canoe*, *chipmunk*, *chocolate*, *chili*, *hurricane*, *maize*, *moccasin*, *potato*, *tobacco*, *toboggan*, *tomahawk*, *tomato*;
- (plus thousands of place names, including *Ottawa*, *Toronto* and the names of more than half the states of the U.S., including *Michigan*, *Texas*, *Nebraska*, *Illinois*).

Japanese

- *geisha*, *karaoke*, *kimono*, *samurai*, *sumo*, *sushi*, *tsunami*.

Approximately 70% of the English vocabulary are said to be loanwords (cf. Crystal 1995: 27). While some words immediately reveal their foreign origin, other words have become so common in English that it is difficult to imagine that they were borrowed in the first place.

2.2.2. Loan shifts and loan-translations

Another process related to borrowing is that of adapting native words to the new meanings, also known as **loan-shift**. An example from the early Christian era in England is *Easter*, which had earlier been used for a pagan festival, also in spring, in honour of Eostre, the goddess of dawn. Other loan shifts in English include: *God*, *heaven*, and *hell*. The Anglo-Saxons did not borrow the Latin word *deus*, because their native Germanic word *God* was a satisfactory equivalent. Similarly, *heaven* and *hell* express concepts not unknown to Anglo-Saxon paganism and are therefore English words, not loanwords.

Loan translations (or **calques**) show a replication of the structure of a foreign language word or expression by use of synonymous word forms in the borrowing language, e.g. English *beer garden* is a calque on German *Biergarten*, *devil's advocate* 'one who advocates the opposing side' is a calque on Latin *advocatus diaboli*.

Calquing is the word-formation process in which a borrowed word or phrase is translated from one language to another, that is why calques are also referred to as root-for-root or word-for-word translations.

Further examples of common English words, calqued from foreign languages are:

blue-blood (1809)	< <i>sangre azul</i> (Spanish)
commonplace (1540s)	< <i>locus commūnis</i> (Latin)
flea market (1910)	< <i>marché aux puces</i> (Fr.) ('market with fleas')
free verse (1869)	< <i>vers libre</i> (French)
loanword (1860)	< <i>Lehnwort</i> (German)
long time no see	< <i>hǎo jiǔ bu jiàn</i> (Chinese)
wisdom teeth (1880)	< <i>dēntes sapientiae</i> (Latin)
scapegoat (1530)	< <i>azazel</i> , read as <i>ez ozel</i> (Hebrew)

Calques can appear not only through a word-for-word loan translation, but also through a loose loan translation: *brotherhood* for Lat. *fraternitas*, as a translated noun + suffix.

While, in the case of borrowing, a foreign word and its meaning are adopted wholesale into the other language as a loanword, loan shifts and calques emerge when the language is adapted to new concepts.

Further reading

Introductory reading on the history of the English language, in Finegan (2012: ch.13). Elementary reading on word origin in English, in Jackson (1988: ch.2).

Find out more about the origin of words and language change from Minkova & Stockwell (2009: ch.2, ch.3); Katamba (1994); Baugh & Cable (2012) – among others.

Useful, though somewhat outdated, overviews of the history of borrowing in English, in Serjeantson (1961). More advanced readings in the various volumes of the *Cambridge history of the English language* (Hogg 1992; Blake 1992; Lass 1999; Romaine 1998).

Hughes (2000) explores the role of social factors in shaping the development of the English lexicon. On lexis in Middle English, see Kastovsky (1992); and in Early Modern English, see Nevalainen (1999).

On the mechanisms of borrowing in earlier English, see Durkin (2009: ch. 5, ch. 6), and Katamba (1994: ch.10), among others. For advanced reading, see the theoretical account in Antilla (1989: 154–178).

Online sources

OnIED (*Online etymology dictionary*). 2004. (<http://www.etymonline.com>)

OED Online (Oxford English dictionary online). 2004. (<http://dictionary.oed.com/>), based on the 2nd edition of 1989 and updated quarterly with about 1000 new and revised entries.

For a bibliography of etymological dictionaries and books, see also:

<http://www.takeourword.com/bibliography.html>

The *World Loanword Database* (abbr. as WOLD) provides mini-dictionaries of about 1000–2000 entries of 41 languages from around the world, with comprehensive information about the loanword status of each word. Data on loanwords in British English is given in a sub-database of 1505 entries (cf. Grant 2009).

Self-assessed test 2.2.

1. Identify the native word and the borrowed word in each of the following pairs. You may use an etymological dictionary, or you may look for other clues to their origins (the structure of the word, the frequency of occurrence):

*chew / masticate; vend / sell; eat / consume;
malady / sickness; emancipate / free; deadly / mortal;
old / antique; sad / dejected; tell / inform.*

2. Here are pairs of words. Using a good dictionary, find out for each word in each pair whether the root was inherited via Germanic or was borrowed from some other source:

a) *fragile, frail*; b) *dual, two*; c) *nose, nasal*; d) *legal, loyal*

3. Look up the words in an etymological dictionary. State for each word whether it is:

a. native/Germanic word (i.e., one present in the Old English period);

b. if it is not native, indicate the source language and when it was borrowed, in the Old English, Middle English, or Modern English period:

a. <i>time</i>	b. <i>skirt</i>	c. <i>king</i>	d. <i>courage</i>
e. <i>anatomy</i>	f. <i>anger</i>	g. <i>poem</i>	h. <i>canoe</i>
i. <i>landscape</i>	j. <i>stanza</i>	k. <i>beef</i>	l. <i>hamburger</i>

4. For each donor language match the loanwords into Modern English to the semantic fields suggested:

French: a) high culture; b) war / military.

Spanish: a) war; b) animals.
 Italian: a) architecture; b) music; c) literature; d) food.

French: *ballet, bastion, brigade, battalion, cavalry, cabernet, champagne, chic, cognac, grenade, infantry.*

Spanish: *armada, alligator, barricade, canyon, coyote, embargo, mosquito, mustang.*

Italian: *balcony, broccoli, casino, cupola, duo, fresco, fugue, gazette (via French), macaroni, madrigal, motto, piano, opera, prima donna, soprano, stanza, studio, violin.*

From Italian American immigrants:

cappuccino, espresso, pasta, pizza, ravioli, spaghetti, spumante, zucchini.

2.3. Neologisms

The term ‘neologism’ is used for newly-coined words (e.g. *webisode*, a blend of *web* and *episode*) or new senses of an existing word (e.g. *to wikipedia* used as a verb, meaning ‘to conduct a search on the website Wikipedia’ converted from the proper noun Wikipedia ‘a free-content online encyclopaedia.’

Neologisms are constantly being introduced into language (Lehrer 2003), often for the purpose of naming a new concept in domains that are culturally prominent or that are rapidly advancing, such as: electronic communication and the Internet.

2.3.1. Neologisms and nonce-words

A **neologism** is a word which has lost its status of a nonce-formation but is still one which is considered new by most members of a speech community. (cf. Fischer 1998). A **nonce-formation** is a word which is created and used by a speaker who believes it to be new (Bauer 1983); once a speaker is aware of having used or heard a word before, it ceases to be a nonce-formation. Neologisms contribute to language growth and language change. Neologisms are coined for various reasons:

a) In some cases, words are coined to satisfy the need to express a concept. Thus, in printing and media, very often a new concept arrives on the scene and it is necessary to create a new word or phrase with which to express it. The Internet has produced dozens of neologisms: *cookie, cybercafé,*

emoticon, FAQ, hypertext, spamming, webcam, web-enabled, server, bitcoins, augmented reality.

The website *logophilia.com* lists hundreds of new words noticed in print and electronic media, and is adding them all the time. For instance, the postings for January 2010 are the following:

vegangelical	n. An extremely zealous vegan who is eager to make other people believe in and convert to veganism. [Blend of <i>vegan</i> and <i>evangelical</i> .]
obesogen	n. A chemical that leads to obesity by increasing the production and storage capacity of fat cells; an environmental trigger that causes obesity.
wheredunit	n. A murder mystery or detective story where the location of a crime plays a central role.
nontroversy	n. A false or non-existent controversy
manufactroversy	n. A contrived or non-existent controversy, manufactured by political groups who use deception and specious arguments to make their case.

b) New words are devised not just to express a new concept but also to make a serious or playful comment on a new phenomenon:

nannycam	affluent people who employ a nanny to look after their children sometimes don't trust them. So, they conceal a tiny video camera in a toy or some other place where it can spy on their nanny.
permalancer	a freelancer worker who has worked so long for one company as to become in effect a permanent employee.
plutography	the genre of writing that focuses on the lives and lifestyles of the very wealthy
slackademic	a perpetual student - the academic life as a way of avoiding real work.

c) Another large collection of words occurring in journalistic style are created mainly for entertainment or pleasure:

chatterati	where the chattering classes and the so-called literati meet: TV personalities and chat-show hosts, newspaper columnists, and others
evangineer	someone who has the evangelistic urge to change the world and the technological skill with which to do it.
paperazzi	the reporters from tabloid newspapers who chase after celebrities just as their photographer colleagues, the paparazzi, do.

Another website, *Word Spy*, looks for fresh words and phrases that appeared at least three times in print or online, especially in newspapers, magazines,

and books. Thus, for instance, for November 2016, it highlights the coined word *thrisis* giving its meaning and etymology:

thrisis n. a period of age-related anxiety, stress, and self-doubt experienced by some people in their thirties.
etymology: *thirties* + (*mid-life*) *crisis*

A great number of the new words that are coined will not survive for long. They are subject to fashion and so only have a short life.

On the other hand, there are words in English created for a single occasion, **nonce-words**, to solve an immediate problem of communication. Examples of nonce-words are: *afterhaps* ‘subsequent happenings,’ *copywrong* ‘the disregard for copyright law,’ *eleventeen* ‘twenty-one,’ etc.

English is still growing, with almost 800 neologisms added to the working vocabulary of the language every year. Over half of the new items come from combinations of old ones, but there continues to be a lot of borrowing from other languages.

2.3.2. Neologisms and word-formation

Neologisms are based on different word-building processes: compounding, clipping, abbreviations, blending, or combinations of these.

Suffixation is still the primary source of new complex words in English such as: *bullyable*, *wrongish*, *tabloidification*. Some currently used derivatives allow formal variation, i.e. they occur as morphological doublets (rival forms) that share the same base but involve two distinct affixes, for instance, doublets in *-ness* and *-ity* such as *prescriptiveness* / *prescriptivity*. Usually, one of the rival forms eventually takes over and becomes established while the other variant sinks into oblivion or the doublets may acquire specialised meanings, as in *economic* / *economical*.

Compounding has also contributed a lot of recent vocabulary items to present-day English, such as *expert file*, *data cruncher*, in the field of computing, and an increasing number of neo-classical compounds with recently popular initial combining forms *bio-*, *eco-*, *cyber-*. Conversion produces mainly verbs, from nouns and adjectives (*to rear-end*, *to silicone*, *to source*, *to stiff*). (cf. Szymanek 2005: 441)

There is a tendency for neologisms to become shorter. That is why acronyms like *scuba* and *ID*, clippings like *lab* (< *laboratory*, *labrador*) and *vet* (< *veterinarian*, *veteran*), and some blends like *fortran* (< *formula* + *translation*) and *transceiver* (< *transmitter* + *receiver*) are shortened for

efficiency. The formation of blends and acronyms is a characteristic of late 20th-century English. (cf. Ayto 1999, *Twentieth-century words*).

However, Lehrer (2003) notes that what is unusual about most new blends and other trendy neologisms is that they don't increase efficiency. In fact, they create more effort to interpret – at least at first, until readers and hearers have figured out what the source words are and what they mean. *Cocacolonization* (< *Coca cola* + *colonization*) is easy to get, but *squangle* (< *square* + *angle*) and *narcoma* (< *narcotic* + *coma*) are harder to process than the whole compounds.

The rapid extension of popular culture and global communication has led to an explosion of new words. Speakers of English today are subjected to a torrent of new words and phrases, many of which are at first sight incomprehensible and few of which will survive long enough to make it into a dictionary.

Dictionary-based and corpus-based methods of studying lexical growth

For a search of neologisms in English, see the following dictionaries:

The Oxford dictionary of new words (1997) and Green (1991) *Neologisms: new words since 1960*; as well as Ayto's 1999 dictionary: *Twentieth-century words*, which is aimed at a wider audience. The most important material on lexical innovations is available in Algeo 1991 (*Fifty years among the new words: a dictionary of neologisms 1941-1991*).

For a corpus-based study of neologisms based on acronyms, blends and clippings, see Fischer (1996).

For corpus-based studies of neologisms with a more theoretical orientation, including an interest in the productivity of the word-formation processes, see Plag et al (1998) and Plag (1999).

Online sources

For an up-date on neologisms in English, see freely available sources, such as: *logophilia.com* (available at: <https://wordspy.com>); *word spy* (available at: <https://www.wordspy.com>). These were not designed as research tools for linguists but nevertheless provide very interesting and pertinent data.

Further reading

You can find more on lexical change in the 20th century in Mair (2006: ch.3).

On the latest trends in English word-formation, see Szymanek (2005: 429-448).

Self-assessed test 2.3.

1. Analyse the structure of the following neologisms and decide on the type of blending involved in their production:

bookvertising, aerobat, cyborg, boatel, smist, Eurovision, triathlete, robomb, travelogue, computeracy, pictionary, internet, amtrac, avionics, paratroops

- a. blending with clipped first element
 - b. blending with clipped second element
 - c. clipped first element + clipped second element
2. Decide on the word-formation process in the following neologisms:
accessorise, gadgeteer, laseronic, robotics, sanforise, urbanologism
 3. Identify neologisms and comment on the word-formation process involved in their coining:
 - a. *I wikipediaed the article on science and learned about the scientific method.*
 - b. *Dancing teenagers flash mobbed the store.*
 - c. *The cost to spam an advertisement in thousands of news groups is typically less than \$50/Spamming.*
 - d. *You have probably heard of “vlogging,” or “video blogging” before.*
 - e. *White foods – essentially, “bad carbs” like sugar and baked goods made with white flour – have been fingered as a culprit in America's obesity epidemic.*
 4. Look at the words and phrases that are listed on the website of the American Dialect Society (<http://www.americandialect.org/>) in the section “Word of the Year.” Are any of these neologisms related to a specific social, cultural or political event that took place last year and was widely debated on? Is any of these words going to become widely used? Try to predict which neologisms will quickly be forgotten, and which will last for a longer period of time.

Summary

In this chapter, attention has shifted to the origin of words and the expansion of the English vocabulary through borrowing and new word creation.

Knowledge about the history of the words is essential in understanding issues related to the present-day English word-stock, such as onomasiology and semantic change.

The differences between Old English and Modern English are largely the result of a series of events in the history of the country that brought the English language into contact with other European languages, often as a subordinate language. Over the centuries, English expanded its vocabulary by extensively borrowing lexical items, mainly from French. Borrowing accounts for the noteworthy diversity of etymological sources of the present-day English vocabulary. However, the core vocabulary, namely the commonest and most basic words used in English today, is of Germanic origin.

The modern English vocabulary reflects not only the effects of significant borrowing but also the process of new word-formation. We have considered the ways in which, using the internal resources of the language, speakers are able to produce an indefinitely large number of new words, that are either transient, as nonce-words, or make their way into the dictionaries, as established neologisms.

3. Word meaning

In this chapter, we will focus on issues related to the meaning of lexemes. The linguistic discipline that systematically studies the meaning-related properties of lexemes is known as **lexical semantics**. It examines the meaning of:

- a. **simple words**, that cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful parts (like *cat*, *boy*, *book*, *house*);
- b. **morphologically complex words** whose meaning is not predictable from the meanings of the parts, including compounds (like *bluebottle* meaning ‘a plant or an insect,’ not a bottle); and
- c. **set phrases** whose meaning is not compositional, such as phrasal verbs like *give up* ‘quit’ and idioms like *hit the roof* ‘become suddenly very angry’ or *in a nutshell* ‘briefly’ (Note that set phrases function like individual lexemes).

First, we will distinguish between connotation and denotation in the meaning of words, then we will look at the two types of sense relations established among lexemes: the syntagmatic ones, found in collocations and idioms, and the paradigmatic ones, involving synonymy, antonymy or hyponymy. We will highlight their role in structuring the vocabulary and their relevance in the lexicographic research and in the creation of computerized linguistic resources. Next, we will consider another mode of structuring the vocabulary – the thematic grouping of words into lexical fields – and we will examine the components of meaning shared by such groups of thematically related lexemes. Finally, we will deal with the dictionary meaning of lexemes, as given in dictionary definitions, and we will provide a brief survey of the dictionary types available for research.

3.1. Denotation and connotation

The meaning of a lexeme can be analysed in terms of denotation and connotation. **Denotation** is that part of the meaning of a word or phrase that relates it to phenomena in the real world or in a fictional or a possible world. Denotative meaning may be regarded as the **central** or **core meaning** of a lexical item. It is often equated with **referential/ descriptive meaning**.

Connotation is given by the additional meanings that a word or phrase has, beyond its central meaning. These meanings reveal people's emotions, mental states and attitudes towards what the word or the phrase refers to. Connotation is sometimes referred to as **affective/ attitudinal meaning** or **emotive meaning**, as shown in Leech (1981): "The connotations of a language expression are pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation (or referent) and also from experience, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which that expression is typically used." For example, the noun *child* has the denotation 'a young human being' and the connotation 'affectionate,' 'amusing,' 'lovable,' 'sweet,' 'noisy,' 'irritating.' The adjective *lonely* has the denotative meaning 'alone, without company' and the emotive connotation 'melancholic, sad.' The adjective *celebrated* has the denotation 'widely known' and the evaluative connotation 'for special achievements in science and art.' The verb *to shudder* means 'to tremble' and it has the emotive connotation 'with horror, disgust.' The meaning of a lexeme is, in part, its relation to other lexemes of the language. Each lexeme is linked in some way to numerous other lexemes in **sense**. There are two intersecting kinds of linkage among lexemes: syntagmatic and paradigmatic.

The **syntagmatic** relation is the mutual association of two or more words in a sequence so that the meaning of each is affected by the other(s); There is a certain mutual expectancy between the main lexemes in a sentence. For instance, in the sentence: *He settled his dispute with the management.*, our linguistic intuition tells us that *settle* tends to occur with *dispute* and not with **war* or **fight* and *dispute* is expected to be followed by a noun denoting a human participant, not an object (**with a gun*). Expectancies of this kind are known as collocations.

The **paradigmatic** (or **substitutional**) relation is a relation of choice. We choose from among several words that might fill the same blank: the words may be similar in meaning or have little in common, but each is different from the others. For instance, instead of saying *He settled his dispute with the management.*, we can say: *He settled his argument/ disagreement with the management.* or *He settled his dispute with his neighbours/ villagers/ colleagues.* Certain constituents of the sentence can be replaced by other words, similar in meaning or different. All these options can be visualised as follows:

He settled his dispute	with the management.
argument	the villagers
disagreement	his neighbours.
issue	his colleagues.

The syntagmatic sense relations are understood sequentially and thus are related to the horizontal dimension, while the paradigmatic or substitutional sense relationships are shown vertically.

Both paradigmatic and syntagmatic sense relations are relevant to the analysis of word meanings in a lexical field (see section 3.5.1.) and to identify semantic features in the componential analysis of meaning (see section 3.5.2.)

Further reading

Elementary reading on lexical semantics in Finegan (2012: 195–207) and other introductions to linguistics.

See Lyons (1977: ch. 7) on reference, sense (his term for *meaning*) and denotation; on syntagmatic and paradigmatic sense relations, see Leech (1981); Cruse (2000: ch.8, ch.9); Cruse (2003: §5.1., 5.2).

Self-assessed test 3.1.

1. Give the denotation of the following words and compare your definition to the definition given in a monolingual English dictionary (e.g. *Oxford English dictionary*):
hand, fish, milk, red, pregnant, follow.
2. Comment upon the connotations of the following words:
candle, flower, bird, faraway, milk, pig, tram, chariot.
3. Comment on the differences in the connotation of the following synonyms: *home, residence, domicile, abode.*

3.2. Syntagmatic sense relations

Sense relations are syntagmatic when they are established between words that are able to co-occur with each other in meaningful sequences. Typically, syntagmatic sense relations hold between words of different categories, such as verbs and nouns or adverb, prepositions and nouns, etc. Collocations and idioms are the main types of syntagmatic lexical relations.

3.2.1. Collocations

Meaning is more than denotation and connotation. Word meaning is influenced by the context in which that word occurs. The tendency of words

to occur together repeatedly is called **collocation**. Collocation refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together, for example, which prepositions are used with particular verbs, or which nouns and verbs are used together. The verb *perform*, for instance, is used with the noun *operation*, but not with *discussion* (*to perform an operation*, but not *to perform a discussion*).

Lexical items which are ‘collocated’ are said to be **collocates** of each other; thus, *perform collocates with operation*, or, *perform* and *operation* are collocates. Collocations are **strong** when the words are closely associated with each other:

The girl has auburn hair.

The young man felt deliriously happy. (extremely happy)

Auburn only collocates with words connected with hair (*curls, locks*), *deliriously* is strongly associated with *happy*, not with *glad, content, sad*.

Weak collocations, on the other hand, are made up of words that collocate with a wide range of other words: *broad* collocates with *agreement* in *to be in broad agreement with sb.*, but also with other words: *a broad avenue, a broad smile, broad shoulders, a broad accent* (strong accent), *broad hint* (strong hint). Or, another example, the adjective *big* is used in collocation with a noun denoting a happening or an event: *a big accomplishment/ decision/ disappointment/ failure/ improvement/ mistake/ surprise*. Strong and weak collocations form a continuum, with strong and weak collocations at the ends.

Most collocations lie somewhere between them. The potential of items to collocate is known as their **collocability** or **collocational range**. (cf. Crystal 1995: 160) For example, the verbs *have, do, make, come, go, get* have a high potential of collocability, they frequently occur in collocations:

have a bath/ have a drink/ have a haircut/ have a holiday/ have a problem/ have a relationship/ have a rest/ have lunch/ have sympathy;

do business/ do nothing/ do someone a favour/ do the cooking/ do the housework/ do the shopping/ do the washing up/ do your hair/ do your homework;

make a difference/ make a mess/ make a mistake/ make a noise/ make money/ make progress/ make room/ make trouble.

As a type of syntagmatic lexical relation, collocations are linguistically predictable to a greater or lesser extent.

Some words have no specific **collocational restrictions** – grammatical words such as *the, of, after, in*. They can collocate with any noun. By contrast, there are many totally predictable restrictions, as in *eke + out, spick + span*, and these are usually analysed as idioms, clichés, etc.

Another important feature of collocations is that they are formal (not semantic) statements of co-occurrence; e.g. *green* collocates with *jealousy* (as opposed to *blue* or *red*), even though there is no referential basis for the link.

Classification of restricted collocations

There have been three main attempts to classify restricted collocations. The first type is based on the syntactic characteristics of the collocation, the second on its semantic characteristics and the third on the commutability of its elements. In the first type, restricted collocations are classified according to the word classes in which their elements appear. Hausmann (1989: 1010), for example, divides collocations into six types:

adjective + noun	(<i>heavy smoker</i>)
(subject-)noun + verb	(<i>storm – to rage</i>)
noun + noun	(<i>piece of advice</i>)
adverb + adjective	(<i>deeply disappointed</i>)
verb + adverb	(<i>severely criticise</i>)
and verb + (object-)noun	(<i>stand a chance</i>)

Benson et al (2009) make the distinction between ‘lexical collocations,’ in which two lexical elements co-occur, and ‘grammatical collocations,’ in which a lexical and a more grammatical element (such as a preposition) co-occur. They add the combinations:

noun + preposition	(<i>interest in</i>)
preposition + noun	(<i>by accident</i>)
adjective + preposition	(<i>angry at</i>)

The second type of classification is based on the semantic characteristics of the combination. For instance, Cowie (1992: 6) examines verb-noun collocations and distinguishes between verbs with a ‘figurative,’ a ‘delexical’ and a ‘technical’ (or ‘semi-technical’) meaning. Corresponding collocations would be *deliver a speech, make recommendations, try a case*.

The classification based on commutability established by Howarth (1996: 102) is also restricted to verb-noun collocations. He identifies five types, exemplified as follows:

1. freedom of substitution in the noun; some restriction on the choice of the verb: *adopt/ accept/ agree to a roposal/ suggestion/ recommendation/ plan*;
2. some substitution in both elements: *introduce/ table/ bring forward a bill/ an amendment*;
3. some substitution in the verb; complete restriction on the choice of the noun: *pay/ take heed*;
4. complete restriction on the choice of the verb; some substitution in the noun: *give the appearance/ impression*;
5. complete restriction on the choice of both elements: *curry favour*.

This classification brings to attention the number of elements that are restricted in their commutability and the degree of restriction.

Cranberry Collocations

A special type of collocations is that of cranberry collocations, that include rare fossil words (*amok, cahoots, umbrage*, etc.), with one attested occurrence, or words that have been borrowed from other languages or varieties. Examples of cranberry collocations are:

amok	run amok
cahoots	in cahoots with someone
dint	by dint of something
dudgeon	in high dudgeon
footsie	to play footsie with somebody
kibosh	put the kibosh on something
kith	kith and kin
umbrage	take umbrage

Other cranberry collocations look less peculiar, because the cranberry items have compositional or familiar morphemic structures, but nevertheless now occur only in fixed strings:

accordance	in accordance with something
amends	make amends (for something)
gunpoint	at gunpoint
irrespective	irrespective of
outset	at/from the outset
retrospect	in retrospect
triplicate	in triplicate
unbeknownst	unbeknownst to someone

Historically, cranberry elements had more general uses, but they became more or less obsolete. In the case of *dudgeon*, for instance, OED suggests that from the time of its earliest citation in 1573 the word was typically found with the preposition *in* and often after an adjective such as *high*, *great*, or *deep*. The uses of the word have atrophied until only one form really remains (*in high dudgeon*) (cf. Moon 1998: 77–80).

Collocations and dictionaries

The presence of collocations in dictionaries has been a matter of discussion for some years (Cowie 1981; Benson 1990; Hausmann 1991). There has been a general consensus that collocations need to be more systematically treated in dictionaries, as they are the building blocks of natural-sounding English and essential tools for learners of English who need to access information concerning the lexical environment of words. The knowledge of the restrictions on lexical combinability is part of a L2 competence and should be successfully mastered by learners.

The first large dictionary of English phrases produced by native speakers was *The Oxford dictionary of current idiomatic English* (Cowie & Mackin 1975). Basically, it treated phrasal verbs – multiword units consisting of a verb and a particle and/ or a preposition, e.g. *run into*, *take to*, *put up with*. Then the *Longman dictionary of English idioms* appeared in 1982, followed by *The BBI combinatory dictionary of English* (Benson, Benson & Ilson) in 1986 and Kjellmer's three volume *Dictionary of English collocations* in 1994. *The BBI combinatory dictionary* supplies information about word combinations on several levels, including syntax (for instance, complementation patterns of verbs). Lexical collocations are arranged by grammatical patterns, e.g. transitive verb + noun (*commit treason*), adjective + noun (*strong tea*).

Kjellmer's typology of collocations is based on the grammatical structure of the collocations such as "noun phrase" or "verb phrase +object."

A more recent dictionary of collocations is *The Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English* (2002), or *Online collocations dictionary*, (available at: <http://oxforddictionary.so8848.com>), aimed at upper-intermediate to advanced level. The dictionary contains over 150,000 collocations for nearly 9,000 headwords. It is based on the 100 million word British National Corpus. Internet searches were made to ensure most up-to-date usage for fast changing areas of language like computing. Examples show how the collocations are used in context, with grammar and register information where helpful. It is meant to be a companion volume to the *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*.

Collocations and corpora

Patterns of collocations are much more readily understood with the help of a computerized corpus of texts. An examination of the concordances for the lexeme *child* would return the following results (for lack of space, the sample has been shortened to only 14 examples).

Table 1

1 accomplish admission of a child to a school to which he is den
2 tter of copying **another** child who can. After it has been see
3. Yet the highly **anxious** child suffered a tremendous disadvan
4 tal schools, and **expand** child health care and general medica
5 deral funds granted **for** child welfare services in foster hom
6 s of their passage **from** child to adult, and permits their fo
7 tart training a **healthy** child at the age of seven days. Most
8 e no harder to bear **her** child here in such pleasant surround
9 ale or female, adult **or** child) on a separate card (fiche).Th
10 e treatment for **parent-child** relationship problems compared
11 er's thigh- a **sleeping** child's head, covered with light hai
12 ;he ran wild with **the** child gangs of the neighbourhood, and
13 itable footage of **your** child taking its first steps, you ha
14 ty of "play" to a **small** child: he plays "house" or "doctor"

Table 1 shows a selection of entries for the word *child*. The samples are taken from the Brown Concordancer. Such patterns can be very helpful in highlighting meanings, including parts of speech (*child* is a noun), syntactic phrases (*child* occurs in noun phrases [_{NP} *the highly anxious child*]), inflections (*child's head*), word-formation (e.g. compounding, as in: *parent-child*, *child welfare services*, *child health care*) and patterns of words that co-occur frequently (the adjectives *healthy*, *small* co-occur with the noun *child*).

Table 2

1 uld he ever visit here when he was a kid"? Linda Kay asked.
 2 out. Then, in the fifth, Anniston's kid catcher caught onto
 3 w her she was a gawky, badly dressed kid whose arms were too
 4 ditional lines, it probably has more kid appeal than any oth
 5 appy offered Ernie a cigarette. Nice kid, Ernie thought, too
 6 e? But then he had said, "All right, kid, if that's how you
 7 h you luck when you try scaring that kid". Suddenly he grin
 8 d those of Jesse James and Billy the kid, and Bill Tilghman
 9 loor, his legs driving him hard. The kid hit the bigger man
 10 n across the street, talking to the kid. They've found some
 11 nd him. Hans had his fingers in the kid's mouth. "Now he'll
 12 ad smack you in the eye. We used to kid him by saying he on
 13 s so at the Marine base. A New York kid, a refugee from one
 14 "Grosse? You ain't kidding me- the kid don't know the name
 15 oat winked at his six cronies. "The kid has no manners, boys

Table 2 shows a selection of entries for the word *kid* from Brown Concordancer. Apparently, synonymous words can be substituted for one another. For instance, the words *kid* and *child* are considered synonyms. However, corpora show that these words are not easily substitutable. In Table 2 several sentences would not allow the substitution of *kid* for *child*, for example: in colloquial English (sentences in 5, 6), or in dialectal English (sentences 13, 14) *kid* occurs with a negative, derogatory connotation. By contrast *child* is more formal in usage and it occurs more frequently in compounds (T1: 4, 5, 9, 10). Although substitution for one another is possible in several sentences (T1: 7, 11, 13, 14; T2: 3, 7, 10), these would sound odd and convey a different connotation. Such lists with sample sentences provide a great deal of information about the morphological, syntactic and semantic behaviour of any word or phrase.

Similar sample sentences of KWIC (key word in context) entries can be obtained from the British National Corpus. Up to fifty example sentences are chosen randomly from the 100 million word resources of the British National Corpus.

Further reading

For an overview of the main research on collocations and a detailed account of the two main approaches to collocations, Sinclair's (1991) frequency-based approach, and Cowie's (1981, 1994) phraseological approach, see Nesselhauff (2005: 11–24). For an account of collocations in terms of syntagmatic and paradigmatic lexical relations, see Moon (1998).

For examples of collocations, see dictionaries, especially: *The BBI combinatory dictionary of English* (2009) and *Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English* (2002).

Self-assessed test 3.2.1.

1. Indicate the collocations of the verb *to lay* and of the adjectives *great* and *large*.
2. Look at the right-hand lexical collocates of the verb *enjoy* in *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) and in *British National Corpus* (BNC). Give 5 examples of collocating adjectives and 5 of collocating nouns in each corpus.
3. Give as many collocations of the verbs *have*, *come*, *get* as you can think of. Then check with a dictionary.
4. Consult the *BBJ combinatory dictionary of English* on-line and select the collocations of the nouns *decision*, *question*, *talk* and of the verbs *to arrive*, *to deny*.
5. Give the meaning and the etymology of the fossil words:
amok, *cahoots*, *kibosh*, *kith*, *unbeknownst*, *umbrage*, *retrospect*
6. Find examples of verbal, adverbial and nominal collocates for the emotion adjectives: *frightened*, *sad*, *worried* and group them into the following types:
 - a. verb + adjective: *to look frightened*
 - b. adverb + adjective: *extremely frightened*
 - c. adjective + noun: *a frightened man*

For patterns (a) and (b) use *The online collocations dictionary*, (available at: <http://oxforddictionary.so8848.com>), for pattern (c) search on the *British National Corpus*.

7. Examine the table with the collocations of the lexeme *child*:
 - a. determine what words can co-occur with *child*, either preceding or following it.
 - b. name all the immediate constituents of which *child* is an element.

Example: 1 [*admission of a child*] – noun phrase
10 *parent-child* – compound

3.2.2. Idioms

Most linguists define **idioms** as multi-word or polylexemic expressions (i.e. containing several lexemes), whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of its constituents, for instance: *to kick the bucket* means ‘to die,’ or *It’s raining cats and dogs.* means ‘it is raining heavily.’

Commonly, idioms or **phrasal lexemes** [Lyon’s term (1981)] can be matched with non-idiomatic phrasal expressions, with which they are identical in form:

We’ll come at 6 for the surprise party – now don’t spill the beans!

(figurative meaning)

He knocked the jar over and spilled the beans.

(literal meaning)

The phrasal lexeme has a figurative metaphorical meaning, different from the literal meaning of the non-idiomatic phrasal expression

A distinction among idioms concerns the degree of their transparency. Since the meaning of an idiom is not made up of the meanings of its constituents, idioms are considered largely **opaque**. Idioms can be more or less opaque, or, conversely, more or less transparent. In transparent idioms, such as *to leave the cat out of the bag*, the literal meaning is available, whereas in an opaque idiom such as *to kick the bucket* the literal interpretation is not available, none of the constituents can be mapped onto a referent.

Prototypical idioms have two principal characteristics: they are **non-compositional** and **syntactically frozen**.

3.2.2.1. Non-compositionality

Idioms are non-compositional in the sense that their global meanings cannot be predicted on the basis of the readings of their constituents. For instance, it is not possible to understand the meaning of *to pull someone’s leg* ‘to tease sb.’ on the basis of the standard readings of *pull* and *leg*.

Until the late 70, the main trend in idiom analyses was to view these expressions as non-compositional items, whose meaning is arbitrary and does not have anything to do with the meaning of the constituents. However, research in the past twenty years has shown that a large group of idioms are **partially compositional** in nature, i.e. the meaning of the constituents is connected to the meaning of the idiom. They may contain

one or more lexemes with a conventional meaning or a metaphorical reading.

Idioms can be grouped into three classes depending on how the literal word meaning of the constituents contribute to the meaning of the idiom:

- a. decomposable idioms: a part of the idiom is used literally: *question in to pop a question* ‘to make a proposal of marriage to a woman’;
- b. abnormally decomposable idioms: the referents of an idiom’s parts can be identified metaphorically, for instance *buck in: to pass the buck* ‘to evade responsibility’;
- c. semantically non-decomposable idioms: the meanings of the constituents do not contribute at all to the figurative meaning: *to kick the bucket* ‘to die.’

The idiomatic meaning of many idioms is motivated by metaphor, metonymy or folk understanding. As illustrative examples let us consider the set of body part idioms. Out of 1200 idioms in English 200 are based on nouns denoting parts of the human body, of which 68 contain the word *head*, 62 the word *eye* and 61 the word *heart*, etc. The meaning of many idioms with the noun *head*, is based on:

a) **metaphor**

Several idioms are based on the generalized metaphor **container**, which conceptualizes the head as a vessel of ideas and certain emotions.

The head is a **container** and the ideas are physical objects:

to get/ put ideas into one’s head (‘to make unwelcome suggestions’)
to get something into one’s head (‘to start to believe sth.’)
to put out of one’s head (‘to stop thinking or worrying about sth.’)
to have rocks in one’s head (‘to have a low mental ability’)
to have a thick head (‘to be stupid’); (the head is visualized as a sieve through which ideas cannot pass)

The head is the **repository of emotional states** in the idioms:

to get a big/ swelled head (‘to be overly self-confident or conceited’)
one’s head swells (‘to think very highly of oneself’)
to go to one’s head (‘to make one conceited’)
to give someone a big head (‘to flatter sb. excessively’)

The following idioms are related to the concepts of **anger** or **calmness**:

hothead ('a person who often acts too hastily/ an impetuous person')
to lose one's head ('to lose one's self-control')
to keep a level head ('to remain calm and sensible')
to keep a cool head ('to stay calm in a difficult situation')

The head is viewed as the seat of **conceit** in the idioms:

to hold one's head high up ('to be very confident and proud')
to be head and shoulders above sb. ('greatly superior to')

b) **metonymy** is at the basis of idioms in which the head stands for **mental ability**:

to have a good head for doing something
 ('to have a natural ability to do sth. well')
to have a good head on one's shoulders ('to be intelligent')
to use one's head ('to think, to reason out one's actions')
to put their heads together ('to consult together')

c) conventional knowledge (also **folk understanding**) includes everyday information about the properties of the head:

to be soft in the head indicates low mental ability that is felt to be similar to the soft spot of a baby's head.
to be bone-headed from the neck up ('to be completely stupid'); if bone replaces brain, then the person cannot possess any mental ability.

Also, common gestures involving the head may acquire an idiomatic meaning in:

to scratch one's head ('to wonder')
to shake one's head ('to give a negative response')

Origin of idioms

The origin of specific idioms has been a subject of much speculation and folk etymology. Among the idioms with an indisputable origin are those

found in the Bible (e.g. *throw pearls before the swine, fall from grace, give up the ghost* ‘die’ from King James Bible). These idioms tend to be found in many of the languages into which the Bible was translated.

Many other idioms originate in specific domains: *pull one’s punches, go the distance* (boxing), *have an ace up your sleeve, let the chips fall where they may* (gambling), and *fall on one’s sword, bite the bullet* (warfare). (see more in Flavell & Flavell 1992)

3.2.2.2. Syntactic frozenness vs. flexibility

As multi-word expressions, idioms occur in phrases of various types - noun phrase, preposition phrase, adjective phrase, verb phrase, adverb phrase:

[_{NP} a piece of cake]
 [_{NP} a slap in the face]
 [_{PP} in a nutshell]
 [_{PP} on the double]
 [_{AP} free with one’s money]
 [_{AdvP} as often as not]

Most verb-based idioms occur in one of the following two patterns:

verb + PP	verb + NP
[_{VP} beat [_{PP} around the bush]]	[_{VP} miss [_{NP} the boat]]
[_{VP} step [_{PP} on the gas]]	[_{VP} hold [_{NP} your horses]]
[_{VP} fall [_{PP} on one’s sword]]	[_{VP} do [_{NP} a snow job]]

or as clauses: *It’s raining cats and dogs. The balloon goes up.*

From a syntactic point of view idioms were considered as syntactically frozen structures until the ‘70s. Later linguists argued that not all idioms are rigid constructions. Some idioms can undergo grammatical transformations, while others cannot. Idioms differ to the degree to which they can tolerate morphological and syntactic operations.

Syntactic flexibility

Some idioms do permit a degree of internal change, and are somewhat more literal in meaning than others. Parts of some idioms can be quantified,

Note that ‘*Pete pulled Bill’s left leg/injured leg*’ is syntactically perfectly possible, but the adjectival modification destroys the idiomatic meaning for the original expression.

Moreover, the noun *place* in the idioms *to know one’s place* and *to keep someone in his place* can be modified by *rightful* or *proper*, but in other idioms, like *all over the place*, *to fall into place* and *to go places* no modification is allowed:

He knows his rightful place.
 They keep him in his proper place.
 Everything fell into place.

Occasionally, some idioms can take a **quantifier** to modify a nominal component, e.g. *to look a horse in the mouth* ‘to be grateful’:

She has looked a horse in the mouth.
 That’s the third horse [she has looked in the mouth this year].
 quantifier relative clause

Note that the idiom *occurs* has been relativised around the nominal constituent *horse*.

c) **passivisation**

Some idioms can be passivized, others cannot. One part of the idiom, the post-verbal noun, can be separated from the remainder through the syntactic operation of passivisation. For instance, with the idiom *to bury the hatchet*, it is possible to move the noun *hatchet* to subject position to form a passive sentence that preserves the idiomatic meaning. Similarly, *to pull the string* ‘to manipulate’ can also undergo passivisation:

The hatchet was buried.
 Strings were pulled for Mary to get the job.

But other idioms, like *to kick the bucket*, cannot be turned into passive:

Kim kicked the bucket.
 *The bucket was kicked by Kim.

Note that ‘*the bucket was kicked by John*’ is syntactically acceptable, but the passivisation operation destroys the idiomatic meaning for the original expression. In the passive form, only the literal reading is available.

d) topicalisation

Parts of idioms may be emphasised through **topicalisation** or **clefting**. In topicalisation, a post-verbal noun may be moved to a pre-subject position, as with the idiom *to find skeletons in sb.'s closet* 'to find out embarrassing secrets' in the example from Nunberg et al (1994):

You might find skeletons in his closets.
His closets, you might find skeletons in.
 topicalised object

Emphasis on a component can also be achieved in a cleft construction (cleft sentences have a fixed structure: *it/that* + BE + emphasised constituent + relative clause). Thus, the noun *basket* is emphasised by separating it from the remainder of the idiom and moving it to focus position:

I've put all my eggs into one basket
 That's the basket [into which I've put all my eggs].
 focus position

e) pronominalisation

A nominal component can be pronominalised (i.e. replaced by a pronoun), for instance, in the verbal idiom *to cry one's eyes out* 'to cry very hard' the noun *eyes* may be replaced by a personal pronoun:

Ann cried her eyes out, when he left her.
 Ann cried her eyes out on Tuesday, and she cried them out again on Sunday.

f) ellipsis

Components of idioms can undergo **ellipsis**; an example is *to keep close tabs on sb.* 'to keep sb. under observation' in which the noun *tabs* can be omitted to avoid repetition:

The FBI kept close tabs on Kim.
 The FBI kept closer tabs on Kim [than they kept _ on Sandy].
 (ellipsis in a clause of comparison)

In short, the structure of certain idioms can be affected by such syntactic transformations as:

- a. passivisation
- b. modification by adjectives, quantifiers or relative clauses
- c. components of idioms can be emphasised through topicalisation
- d. components of idioms can be pronominalised or deleted in ellipsis patterns.

The extent to which an idiom can undergo syntactic and morphological operations while at the same time retaining its idiomatic meaning can be expressed in terms of the number and types of grammatical operations that an idiom is capable of tolerating. This degree can indicate the amount of frozenness of an idiom. Idioms can be classified on the basis of their degree of frozenness, from very frozen to very flexible.

A kind of frozenness hierarchy has been proposed by Fraser (1970). In this hierarchy, an idiom at a given level of such a hierarchy, capable of tolerating a given operation, can also tolerate all operations that are allowed by idioms 'below' that level.

Examples of idioms with greater syntactic flexibility are: *to take advantage of sth.* and *to let the cat out of the bag* 'to reveal a secret carelessly or by mistake.' The idiom *to take advantage of sth.* allows for one component to be separated from the remainder through some syntactic operation (passivisation or relativisation):

They regretted that they had taken advantage of the situation.

They regretted [that advantage had been taken of the situation].

(passivisation)

They regretted the considerable advantage [that had been taken of the situation].

(modification)

(passivisation, relativisation)

There are instances when an idiom can be encountered in various patterns:

Let the cat out of the bag. (contraction *out+of*)

The cat is out of the bag.

The cat was let out of the bag. (passive)

The cat that was let out of the bag. (relative clause)

Let the fluorescent cat out of the polythene bag. (adjectival mod.)

Syntactic flexibility is highly variable and idioms can range between full flexibility and full rigidity. Idioms with a certain degree of flexibility are analysed as decomposable idioms.

Idioms in British English and American English

There are some distinctions between idioms in BrE and AmE, although the majority of idioms are common to both varieties. Variations can be noticed in form and usage.

a) Variations in form

Moon (1998: 133ff) points to lexical distinctions between British and American data in connection with the data in *Collins Cobuild dictionary of idioms* (CCDI). For example, it is shown that the verb may vary when one compares idioms in the two languages:

cut a long story short (BrE)
make a long story short (AmE)
wash your dirty linen/laundry in public (BrE)
 (also *do* your dirty washing in public)
air your dirty linen/laundry in public (AmE)

There are also a few cases in Moon's investigation where British and American English have parallel idioms with similar meanings, usages and source domains but there are lexical differences:

a storm in a teacup (BrE)
a tempest in a teapot (AmE)

burn your *bridges* (BrE and AmE)
 burn your *boats* (BrE)

Even more common is the variation of noun or noun modifier between idioms in the two languages:

throw a *spanner* in the works (BrE)
 throw a (*monkey*) *wrench* in the works (AmE)
 'cause problems that prevent sth. from happening'

In the following idiom, the BrE variant includes a possessive adjective, while the AmE one does not:

take things in *one's* stride (BrE)
 take things in stride (AmE)

- food combinations: *bread and butter, fish and chips, food and drink;*
- time expressions: *years and years, day and night, night and day.*

Recurrent **adjective and adjective** binomial phrases indicate:

- demographic/ institutional attributes: *economic and monetary, economic and social, political and economic, social and cultural, personal and social.*
- opposite or complementary attributes: *formal and informal, initial and final, old and new, positive and negative, primary and secondary, strong and weak.*

Verb and verb binominals frequently include the verbs *to come* and *to go*: *come and stay, go and get, go and see*, etc.

Adverb and adverb binominals have a directional or a temporal meaning: *in and out, up and down, there and then.*

Trinominals are rare: *here, there and everywhere, blood, sweat and tears.*

Idioms in dictionaries

Dictionaries of idioms provide information on the meaning and usage of idioms in BrE and/ or AmE:

- *Cambridge international dictionary of idioms* (1998) covers BrE, AmE and AusE. and it is based on the Cambridge International Corpus. It contains 7000 idioms, arranged alphabetically, with notes on the history of idioms.
- *NTC's thematic dictionary of American idioms* (1998) is arranged in 900 themes.
- *Oxford idioms dictionary for learners of English* (2006) includes 10,000 British and American idioms that are frequently used by native speakers. Simple definitions help learners understand what the idioms mean and corpus-based examples show how idioms are used in everyday English.
- *Collins Cobuild dictionary of idioms* (1995) relies on the data from the Bank of English corpus and deals with 4400 idioms.
- *Longman American idiom dictionary* (1999) defines 4000 idioms.

Idioms online

To discover the meanings and origin of idioms, access: <http://www.phrases.org.uk/>.

On the most widespread idioms that share the same lexical and semantic structure across many languages, see <http://www.widespread-idioms.uni-trier.de/>
 You can go to the British National Corpus (<http://www.natcorp.ox.at.uk/>), type in an idiom and you will be given up to 50 examples of its use.
 Use a search engine (e.g. <http://www.google.co.uk/>), type in an idiom in double inverted commas to get a list of sites including that idiom.

Further reading

For a straightforward account of non-compositionality and syntactic frozenness, see Fellbaum (2011: 441–456).

On literal vs. figurative meaning, see Cacciari (1993: 27–52). On the connection between figurative meanings of idioms and culture, see Piirainen (2007).

For a discussion of types of binominals and their use in different registers, see Biber et al (1999: 1029–1036).

More on collocations, idioms and binominals, in Gramley and Pätzold (2004: ch.3).
 For a detailed treatment of fixed expressions, including idioms, see Moon (1998).

Self-assessed tests. 3.2.2.

1. Make up sentences to illustrate the difference in meaning, when the following phrases are used as:
 - a) free word collocations;
 - b) phraseological units.

best man, burn one's fingers, keep one's head above water, show somebody the door, to cry over spilt milk, the last straw.

Example: *break the ice*:

- a) He told her a joke **to break the ice**.
 - b) Ice breakers are *ships* designed to *break ice* and make way in extremely cold climatic regions.
2. Label the transformations that occurred in the structure of the following idioms:

Idiom	transformations	comment
They buried the hatchet.	It seems that the hatchet was buried.	

	The hatchet seems not to have been buried yet by those journalists.	
Sam ate his heart out over Jane.	Sam ate his heart out over Jane on Wednesday, then he ate it out over Ann on Thursday.	
	Sam ate his heart out over Jane, and Dan ate HIS out over Ann.	
Bob cried his eyes out.	Bob cried his eyes out on Tuesday, and Dan cried HIS out on Sunday.	
His words had touched a nerve.	The mere mention of John had touched a very raw nerve indeed.	
He won't pull the strings for you.	Those strings, he won't pull for you.	
They planned to cook his goose.	My goose is cooked, but yours isn't.	
They pulled Pete's leg.	Pete's leg was pulled continually.	

3. Comment on the differences between the AmE and the BrE versions the following idioms:

BrE	AmE
<i>the icing on the cake</i>	<i>the frosting on the cake</i>
<i>fight like cat and dog</i>	<i>fight like cats and dogs</i>
<i>weep buckets</i>	<i>cry buckets</i>
<i>take the biscuit</i>	<i>take the cake</i>

4. Newspaper headlines often employ idioms to draw the readers' attention. Find five examples of idioms in newspaper headlines by using a search engine (<http://www.google.co.uk/>):

Example: *burn a hole in the pocket*

Renting your house could burn a hole in your pocket.

(Louise McBride 23. September, 2012)

<http://www.independent.ie/business/personal-finance/renting-out-your-house-could-burn-a-big-hole-in-your-pocket-28812982.html>

5. Identify the type of binominals occurring in the following examples:

- a) *There's nothing important in those cupboards, just a few odds and ends.*
- b) *People travel from far and wide to see the birthplaces of the Beatles.*
- c) *The next match is make or break for us. If we lose we'll have no chance of winning the league.*
- d) *For some old people loneliness is part and parcel of everyday life.*
- e) *The rules and regulations in prisons are very strict.*
- f) *There's always lots of hustle and bustle at the market on Wednesdays.*
- g) *Follow the course and step by step you will learn how to create web pages.*
- h) *Let's toss a coin to see who starts. You call: heads or tails!*
- i) *She doesn't enjoy living in the country side. She is a city person, through and through.*

6. Examine the entry for the verb *to eat* and the noun *heart* in three different dictionaries of your choice (if possible, a learner's dictionary, a dictionary of idioms and a dictionary of collocations) What information does each dictionary provide on collocations and idioms?

3.3. Paradigmatic sense relations

Paradigmatic sense relations hold between words of the same category and are characterised in terms of hierarchy (hyponymy, meronymy), similarity (synonymy) or contrast (antonymy).

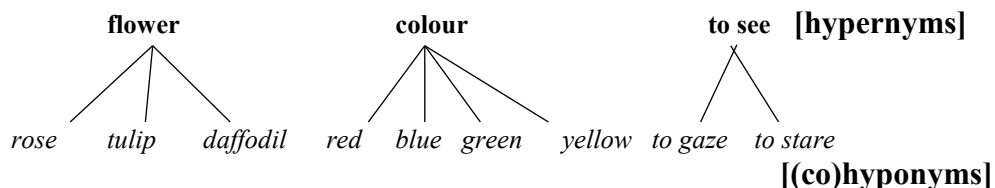
The organisation of words into classes and subclasses is known as **lexical taxonomy**. It is based on the meaning of words, not on their form. The main semantic relationships involved are hyponymy and meronymy, which may be used for classification.

3.3.1. Hyponymy

Hyponymy refers to a set of related lexemes whose meanings are instances of a more general lexeme. This relation is often defined as one of inclusion.

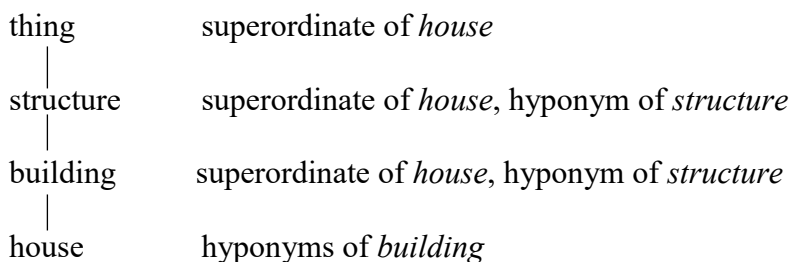
Such a sense relationship exists between the nouns *rose*, *tulip*, *daffodil* and *flower*, the adjectives *red*, *blue*, *green*, *yellow*, and the noun *colour*, or between the verbs *to gaze*, *to stare* and *to see*.

The more specific term is called a **hyponym**, the more general word is a **superordinate**, also referred to as **hypernym**, or **hyperonym**.



The term **superordinate** (introduced by Lyons 1977) is often preferred in place of the alternative **hypernym** (Fellbaum 1998), which is less favoured due to its phonetic similarity to *hyponym*. Two hyponyms sharing the same superordinate are called co-hyponyms. Co-hyponyms are generally incompatible in sense, for instance: *rose* and *tulip* are co-hyponyms of *flower*, but they are incompatible (**A rose is a tulip*). Therefore, the entities denoted by hyponyms represent a subclass or subset of the superordinate term. That is why the phenomenon is sometimes referred to as **inclusion**: ‘An X is a kind of Y’ – *A daffodil is a kind of flower*. (cf. Crystal: 2008)

Griffiths (2006: 48) notes that a superordinate at a given level can itself be a hyponym at a higher level:



Thus, *house* is a hyponym of the superordinate *building*, but *building* is, in its turn, a hyponym of the superordinate *structure*, and, in its turn, *structure* is a hyponym of the superordinate *thing*.

Hyponymy is a transitive relation, if, for instance, *house* is a hyponym of *building*, and *building* is a hyponym of *structure*, then *house* is a hyponym of *structure*. In addition, it should be noted that a word can be both a hypernym and a hyponym: for example, *building* is a hyponym of *structure* and a hypernym of *house*.

Hyponyms and hypernyms may have multiple layers, as in the following examples (cf. Israel 2014: 167), where *fry* is a hyponym of the hypernym *cook*, but *fry* itself is a hypernym for some other types of frying:

hypernym: *cook* hyponyms: *bake, boil, grill, fry, steam, roast*
 hypernym: *fry* hyponyms: *stir-fry, pan-fry, sauté, deep-fry*

Hierarchies engendered by hyponymy may be cross-cutting (cf. Cann 2011: 458). This involves that certain words may be hyponyms of more than one superordinate, depending on diverse features of affinity taken into consideration. In other words, they can be members in different hyponym hierarchies.

Hyponymy and lexicography

Hyponymy is a paradigmatic sense relation essential in structuring the vocabulary of a language. Hyponymy is particularly important to lexicography because it is the core relationship within a dictionary. Due to social and cultural norms, specific of each language, hyponymy tends to impose a certain hierarchy on the lexicon.

Dictionary headwords are usually defined by providing a hypernym, the meaning of which is contained in the meaning of its hyponyms, as part of their definition, to which a number of various individual features are added, as in the following illustrations excerpted from the *Merriam-Webster dictionary for learners of English*:

flower: a small plant that is grown for its beautiful flowers
rose: a flower with a sweet smell [...] that grows on a bush [...]
daffodil: yellow flower that blooms in the spring [...]

colour: a quality such as red, blue, etc., that you see when you look at sth
red: having the colour of blood
blue: having the colour of the clear sky

As can be noticed, the lexeme *flower* is defined as ‘a plant’ (a hypernym), the lexeme *rose* as ‘a flower’ (a hypernym). Thus, the lexeme *flower*, in its turn, functions as a hypernym in the definition of the lexeme *rose*. Similarly, the definition of the lexeme *colour* includes ‘quality’ (a hypernym). Often it is possible to trace a hyponymy path in the lexicon, as hypernyms become increasingly abstract.

building	hyponym of <i>structure</i> , superordinate of <i>house</i>
house	hyponym of building

4. Identify the levels (basic, superordinate, subordinate) in the following groups of words:

- a. *apple, fruit, Granny Smith*
- b. *garment, trousers, jeans*
- c. *chair, wheelchair, furniture*
- d. *bread-knife, cutlery, knife*
- e. *crockery, saucer, plate*

Example: superordinate basic subordinate
 fruit > apple > Granny Smith

5. The following words are hyponyms of *tableware*. Draw a hierarchical diagram of the words to illustrate the taxonomic relations between them. Identify basic-level words:

bread-knife, whisky glass, knife, tea-spoon, bowl, cheese-knife, platter, cutlery, fork, mug, wine-glass, tea-cup, tea-pot, spoon, cup, saucer, glassware, soup-spoon, glass, crockery, plate, fish-knife.

3.3.2. Meronymy

Besides synonymy and antonymy, there is another widely recognised paradigmatic sense-relation – **meronymy** – which involves a ‘part-whole’ relation: *line < stanza < poem*:

meronym		holonym
finger	<	hand
nose	<	face
blade	<	knife
hard disk	<	computer
page	<	book
collar	<	shirt
wheels	<	car

The word referring to the part is called **meronym** and the word referring to the whole is called **holonym**. The names of sister parts of the same whole are called **co-meronyms**. Notice that this is a relational notion: a word may be a meronym in relation to a second word, but a holonym in relation to a

third. Thus, *finger* is a meronym of *hand*, but a holonym of *knuckle* and *fingernail*.

The number of identified subtypes of meronym or part<whole relations varies. Cruse (1986: 157–180) distinguishes two main types: **necessary** meronyms, such as *ear*<*body*, and **optional**, such as *handle*<*door* (since a handle is not always a part of a door).

Iris et al (1988) define three subtypes of meronyms: **whole>segment** relation (*month*>*day*, *bread*>*slice*); **whole>functional component** (*car*>*engine*, *door*>*handle*) and **collection>member** (*pride*>*lion*, *crew*>*captain*).

Winston et al (1987) argue for the existence of six meronymy types:

Component < Integral Object	<i>pedal</i> < <i>bicycle</i> ; <i>punchline</i> < <i>joke</i>
Member < Collection	<i>member</i> < <i>committee</i> ; <i>card</i> < <i>deck</i>
Portion < Mass	<i>slice</i> < <i>pie</i> ; <i>grain</i> < <i>rice</i>
Stuff < Object	<i>flour</i> < <i>cake</i> ; <i>glass</i> < <i>bottle</i>
Place < Area	<i>oasis</i> < <i>desert</i> ; <i>London</i> < <i>England</i>
Feature < Activity	<i>swallowing</i> < <i>eating</i> ; <i>dating</i> < <i>adolescence</i>

Meronymy must not be confused with **hyponymy**, although some of their properties are similar: for instance, both involve a type of ‘inclusion,’ co-meronyms and co-taxonyms have a mutually exclusive relation, and both are important in **lexical hierarchies**. However, they are distinct: *a dog* is a kind of animal, but not a part of an animal; *a finger* is a part of a hand, but not a kind of hand.

Further reading

For a detailed account of meronymic hierarchies, see Cruse (1986: ch.7) and Murphy (2003: 230–236).

Self-assessed test 3.3.2.

1. Draw a diagram based on meronymy to show *have* relationships among the following words:

- a. *leg, hoof, knee, paw, dog, horse, mane, tail, claw*
- b. *brick, wall, flat, building, door, handle, nail*

The lines connecting the words should represent the *have* relation (the possessed is part of the possessor: e.g. *The dog has a tail*).

2. Identify the type of meronymic relation (cf. Winston et al 1987) that holds between the terms, and make up short sentences to illustrate this relation:

<i>wheels < car</i>	<i>chapters < book</i>	<i>Belgium < NATO</i>
<i>juror < jury</i>	<i>ship < fleet</i>	<i>phonology < linguistics</i>
<i>officer < army</i>	<i>slice < bread</i>	<i>yard > mile</i>
<i>martini > alcohol</i>	<i>water > hydrogen</i>	<i>baseline < tennis court</i>
<i>bike > steel</i>	<i>fence < garden</i>	<i>bidding < playing bridge</i>
<i>running < playing football</i>		

3.3.3. Synonymy

Synonymy is defined as similarity of meaning. **Synonyms** are lexemes that have the same or almost the same general sense and are interchangeable at least in some contexts.

3.3.3.1. Absolute synonymy vs. near-synonymy

Distinction is made between full (complete or absolute synonymy) and incomplete synonymy.

Absolute or **full synonyms** require an absolute identity in meaning, for instance: *sweater / pullover*, *begin / commence* and *false / untrue*. Perfect synonyms are rarely encountered, because there are few lexemes which could substitute for each other in all possible contexts:

He wore a blue sweater / pullover.

The concert began/commenced with a traditional hymn.

Near-synonyms are words very similar in meaning, but not identical, not fully intersubstitutable, and varying in their shades of denotation, connotation, emphasis, or register. Cruse (1986: 265–270) and others call near-synonyms **plesionyms** ('almost synonyms').

Partial synonymy is sometimes confused with near-synonymy. **Partial synonyms** are those that do not exactly match in some aspect (denotative, expressive, collocational), whereas near-synonyms do not exactly match particularly in their denotations. Thus, all near-synonyms are partially synonymous, but not all partial synonyms are near-synonymous (cf. Lyons 1995). Lexemes like *feminine* and *womanly* would be called near-synonyms in linguistic semantics, which means that they are very similar but not

entirely identical in meaning. Incomplete or near-synonyms are used in dictionary definitions (*to write / to put down*). Examples of near-synonyms are: *joyful / cheerful*; *heighten / enhance*; *injure / damage*; *idle / inert / passive*.

The differences in meaning between synonyms can be **regional**, **stylistic**, or **emotional**. For example, the synonyms *truck* and *lorry* are used in different dialects (*truck* in AmE / *lorry* in BrE). The pair *sandwich / butty* are synonymous in BrE, but the first is standard English, the latter is regional English. The synonyms *ear* and *lug* denote the same body part but *ear* is standard English, while *lug* is Scots and dialectal. There may be a stylistic difference between synonyms, for example: *insane / loony* (formal – informal); *delay* and *procrastinate* both mean to put off doing something, but *delay* is a neutral term while *procrastinate* is typical of formal written English. There may be an emotional connotation attached to one of the synonyms, for example: *youths* and *youngsters* are synonyms, *youths* is less pleasant than *youngsters*.

The meaning of the synonyms may overlap, but they appear in different combinations. For instance, *freedom* and *liberty* are commonly treated as synonyms in the sentence: *She is enjoying her freedom/ liberty*. but *freedom* can appear in certain combinations (*freedom of expression*, *academic freedom*), in which it cannot be replaced by *liberty* (**liberty of expression*, **academic liberty*). Equally, the meaning of *liberty* is not fully contained in the meaning of *freedom*, because the meaning in: *She took a real liberty*, is peculiar to *liberty*, and not available for *freedom*.

Printed and online thesauri

Synonymous terms are listed in dictionaries of synonyms, also called thesauri. A **thesaurus** is a reference work that lists words grouped together according to similarity of meaning. Unlike a dictionary, a thesaurus entry does not give the definition of words. Some of the best-known printed thesauri are: *American heritage dictionary of the English language* (2006), *Merriam-Webster's dictionary and thesaurus* (2006) *The Oxford dictionary of synonyms and antonyms* (2007).

Synonymous terms can also be searched online. **WordNet** is an electronic thesaurus, a semantically organized lexical database of English. The basic relation in WordNet is synonymy. Words are grouped into **synsets** (i.e., groups of synonyms), as would be found in a thesaurus. If a word has more than one sense, it is represented in more than one synset. Nouns and verbs are represented in hierarchical structures, while adjectives

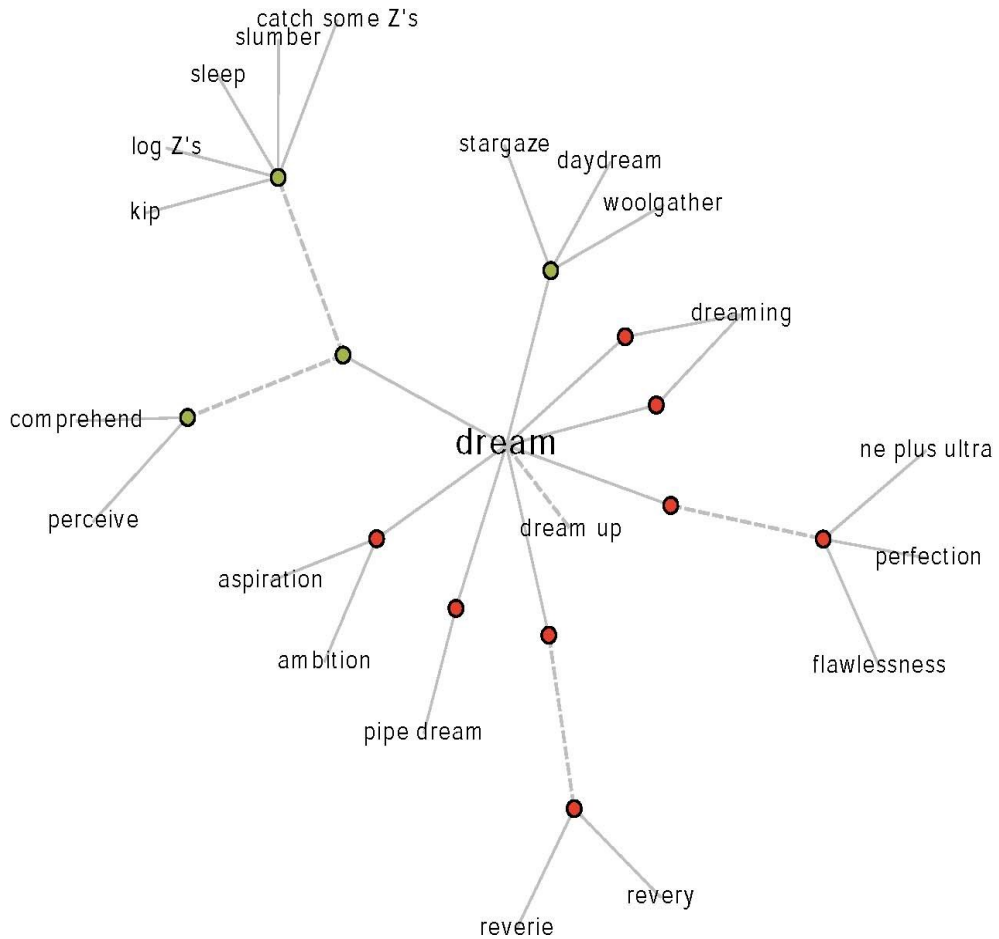
are represented in a non-hierarchical format. For instance, a search for the noun *child* would return the following synset:

- S: (n) **child**, kid, youngster, minor, shaver, nipper, small fry, tiddler, tike, tyke, fry, nestling (a young person of either sex) “*she writes books for children*”; “*they're just kids*”; “*‘tiddler’ is a British term for youngster*”
- S: (n) **child**, kid (a human offspring (son or daughter) of any age) “*they had three children*”; “*they were able to send their kids to college*”
- S: (n) **child**, baby (an immature childish person) “*he remained a child in practical matters as long as he lived*”; “*stop being a baby!*”
- S: (n) **child** (a member of a clan or tribe) “*the children of Israel*”
(WordNet. Princeton University, 2010. <http://wordnet.princeton.edu>)

WordNet is a useful tool for writers, students, language learners, and anyone who needs a definition, a synonym, or a broader view of a word or phrase.

An extension of WordNet is **VisuWords**, which allows one to see a visual interpretation of the WordNet links for words. Each visual map shows the possible meanings and synsets for the central word and the relationships between them all. This online dictionary and thesaurus allows you to look up words to find their associations with other words and concepts. It produces diagrams reminiscent of a mind map or spider gram of how words associate. All the words connected to the same meaning are synonyms. Meanings are represented by color-coded circles to indicate their part of speech. There are four parts of speech represented in the Visual Thesaurus: verb (green), adverb (pink), adjective (orange) and noun (blue).

Antonyms, pairs of words that express opposite concepts, are connected by dashed red lines. Meanings are connected to other meanings by dashed lines. The following diagram is what comes up when you plug *dream* into the search engine:



(VISUAL THESAURUS, available at: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com>)

NOUNS

dream, dreaming

a series of mental images and emotions occurring during sleep

dream, dreaming

imaginative thoughts indulged in while awake

dream, aspiration, ambition

a cherished desire

dream, pipe dream

a fantastic but vain hope (from fantasies induced by the opium pipe)

dream

a state of mind characterized by abstraction and release from reality

dream

someone or something wonderful

"I had a dream about you last night"

"he lives in a dream that has nothing to do with reality"

"his ambition is to own his own business"

"I have this pipe dream about being emperor of the universe"

"he went about his work as if in a dream"

VERBS

●dream, woolgather, daydream, stargaze

have a daydream; indulge in a fantasy

●dream

experience while sleeping "She claims to never dream"

"He dreamt a strange scene"

(VISUAL THESAURUS, available at: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com>.)

Further reading

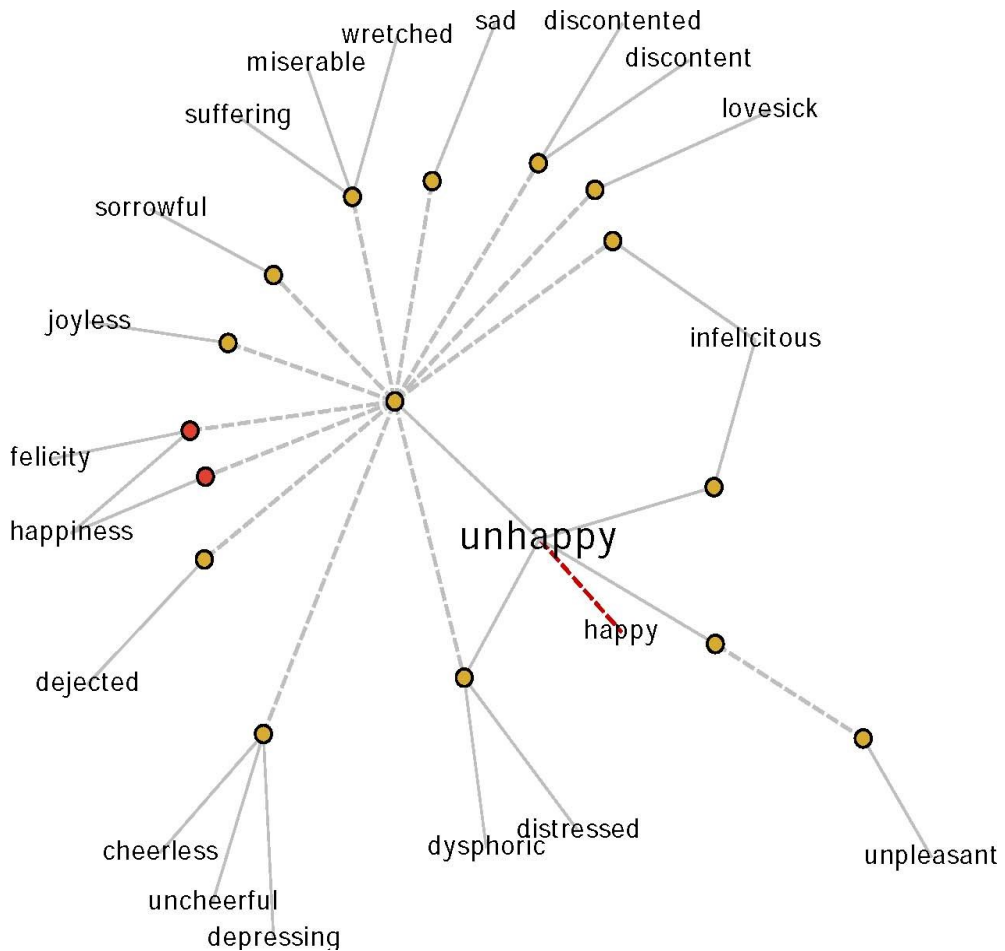
On the merits of WordNet as an electronic thesaurus and a computational tool, as well as on certain problems related to this project, see Murphy (2003: 3.4.2.).

Self-assessed test 3.3.3.1

1. Identify differences in meaning and usage between the following near-synonyms:

*feminine / womanly; (AmE) awesome / (BrE.) wicked;
stubborn / obstinate; mercury / quicksilver.*

2. The graph below is the synset of the word *unhappy* from **Visuwords**, a free online graphical dictionary, linked to Princeton University's WordNet. Give the synonymic series of the adjective, the corresponding nouns and the antonyms.
3. Using Visuwords find the synset of 5 words of your choice, then comment on the difference in meaning between the synonymous terms.



(VISUAL THESAURUS, available at: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com>)

3.3.3.2. Distinguishing among the terms in a synonymic series

Synonyms are grouped in **synonymic series**. The words included in a synonymic series belong to the same grammatical category, i.e. all of them are nouns, or all of them are verbs, etc. Synonymic series can be studied with the help of dictionaries that explicitly differentiate between members of near-synonym groups. For example, *Webster's new dictionary of synonyms* (Gove 1984), which discriminates among approximately 9,000 words in 1,800 near-synonym groups.

Here is an entry abridged from this dictionary that distinguishes between the terms of the synonymic series: *error, mistake, blunder, slip, lapse, faux pas, bull, howler, boner*:

Error implies failure to take proper advantage of a guide. **Mistake** implies misunderstanding; it expresses less severe criticism than error. **Blunder** is harsher than mistake or error; it commonly implies ignorance or stupidity. **Slip** carries a stronger implication of inadvertence than mistake, and often, connotes triviality. **Lapse**, though sometimes used interchangeably with slip, stresses forgetfulness; thus, one says *a lapse of memory* or *a slip of the pen*, but not vice versa. **Faux pas** is most frequently applied to a mistake in etiquette. **Bull**, **howler**, and **boner** are rather informal terms applicable to blunders that typically have an amusing aspect.

In a synonymic series, one of the terms acquires a dominant position and in dictionaries of synonyms it becomes the headword.

The **dominant term/synonym** (or the **prototype**) expresses the most general meaning, all the other members of the series adding some specific features. The meaning of the dominant term is equal to the denotation common to all the members of the synonymic group. Here are examples of dominant terms with their synonymic groups:

to surprise	—	to astonish, to amaze, to astound
to tremble	—	to shiver, to shudder, to shake
to make	—	to produce, to create, to fabricate, to manufacture
angry	—	furious, enraged
fear	—	terror, horror

As can be noticed, the dominant synonym is a typical basic vocabulary item, with a broad generalized meaning, that expresses the meaning common to all terms in the series, without any connotation.

If the dominant term in a synonymic series is a polysemantic word (e.g. the noun *object* has two meanings), then it is included in two synonymic series:

thing, object, article
intention, aim, purpose, end, object, goal, objective

In many cases a **general word** (e.g. *to clean*) has as its equivalents only **specialised words**, which are called ideographic synonyms:

to clean — to cleanse, to clear, to wash, to dust, to purify, to purge,
to wipe

Synonymic series must be regarded as ‘open series’ especially in literary works, as a writer’s imagination cannot be restricted by the limits imposed by dictionaries of synonyms.

Self-assessed test 3.3.3.2.

1. Find the prototype in the following groups of synonyms and give reasons for your choice:

Example: *to depart, to quit, to leave, to clear out, to retire.*

dominant: *to leave*

reasons: it is the general word; it is neutral both stylistically and emotionally and it can stand for each of its synonyms in most uses.

- a. *handsome, lovely, beautiful, pretty, comely, good-looking*
- b. *to inquire, to ask, to question, to interrogate*
- c. *fright, fear, consternation, panic, alarm*
- d. *courage, bravery, fortitude, valour, gallantry*
- e. *powerful, forceful, potent, forcible*
- f. *affection, emotion, sentiment, feeling, passion*
- g. *position, location, situation, site, spot, station, place,*
- h. *just, equitable, fair, impartial, unbiased, dispassionate*
- i. *chase, follow, pursue, trail, tag, tail*

2. Explain the difference in meaning between the following synonymous terms. Check your answers by looking up the word *hate* in a dictionary of synonyms, such as *The Merriam-Webster dictionary of synonyms and antonyms* (2008):

hate, detest, abhor, abominate, loathe

3. Arrange the following words into synonymic groups, headed by the dominant word indicated. Point out the semantic feature(s) shared by them, as shown for group 1:

lack, ghost, affair, absence, scandal, privation, business, spirit, slander, want, defect, apparition, back-biting, concern, thing, detraction, phantom, matter, phantasm, calumny.

1	2	3	4
<u>lack</u> absence privation want defect	<u>ghost</u>	<u>concern</u>	<u>calumny</u>

group 1: The prototype is ‘*lack*.’ The feature shared by the synonymic group is “something wanted that is insufficient or absent.”

group 2:

group 3:

group 4:

4. Look up the words: *calmness*, *scholarly*, *loyal*, *to allow*, *clearly* in Visuwords, to find their associations with other words and concepts. Identify synonymic series, the differences in meaning between the terms of a series, as well as antonyms.

3.3.3.3. Synonymic distributions

Differences between or among synonyms are marked by differences in **lexical distribution**, i.e. they can occur in the same contexts or not. For example, *accident* and *chance* can be used interchangeably in: *to happen by accident/ chance*, but they are not synonymous in other contexts in which they cannot be substituted for each other. Thus, only *accident* can be used in the following: *a traffic accident*, *a cerebral accident*, *an accident of appearance*, *to meet with accident*. While *chance* can only appear in: *to leave things to chance*, *to take one's chance*, *a game of chance*, *chances of peace*, etc. Another example is the pair of synonyms *rancid* – *rotten* that may collocate (co-occur) with different words; *rancid* can only collocate with *butter/ bacon*, while *rotten* collocates with *eggs*. Restrictions of this type are called **collocational restrictions**.

Syntactic variation arises from the different syntactic properties of the synonyms. For example, *sick* and *ill* are both used predicatively (e.g. *She is sick/ill*), but only *sick* can be an attribute (*a sick man*, **an ill man*) or can be part of a compound (*trainsick*, *carsick*, *airsick*, *seasick*), while the term *ill* is not used in compounds (**trainill*, **carill*). Another example, is that of the near-synonyms: *ajar* and *open*. The adjective *ajar* may be used predicatively, not attributively (*The door is ajar*; **the ajar door*), whereas the adjective *open* may be used in either position (*The door is open*; *the open door*). Restrictions of this type are called **syntactic restrictions**.

Words and phrases can have **correlative synonymic relations**, that is they can be reciprocally related, for example:

- a. Phrasal verbs can be correlated with single word verbs:
to give out / to distribute

to give up / to surrender
to take off / to remove

- b. Idiomatic phrases may be synonyms of one or several words:

to take for granted / to assume
to pull someone's leg / to tease
to make a hole in a bottle of brandy / to drink a lot of brandy
to take the bull by the horns / to attack a problem without fear

- c. Correlative relations of synonymy can also be established among idiomatic expressions that show comparison, called **similes**:

to be as blind as a bat / to be as blind as a beetle
/ to be as blind as a mole
to be as black as ink/ coal / midnight / pitch / soot
to be as hard as a rock/ bone / flint / iron / nails
to be as drunk as a lord / a newt / an owl.

These are essentially frames with fossilised lexis; their function is to intensify adjectives. The traditional structure is:

(as) + ADJECTIVE + as + NOMINAL GROUP

However, in the following cases, noun variations are associated with different meanings of the adjective and different contexts, therefore such similes are not synonymous:

clear as a bell (of sounds)	clear as crystal/day (of information)
good as gold (of behaviour)	good as new (of condition)
mad as a hatter (insane)	mad as a hornet (angry)
white as a ghost/sheet (frightened)	white as a sheet (white in colour)

Similes are generally infrequent and pairs of synonymous similes are few.

Further reading

On the distinction between absolute synonyms, cognitive synonyms and plesionyms, see Cruse (1986: ch.12).

See Löbner (2002: 46) for the distinction between total synonyms (with identical descriptive, social and expressive meaning) and partial synonyms (sharing some meaning parts).

Self-assessed test 3.3.3.3.

1. Use the following synonymous words in sentences of your own, paying attention to their distributional opposition and comment upon the syntactic restrictions that you notice.

Example: *sick, ill* My brother is *ill/sick*.

She paid a visit to the *sick* old man.

The adjective *ill* can only be used predicatively; while the adjective *sick* can appear either in predicative position or as an attribute modifying a noun.

to tell, to say *house, home*

to steal, to rob *bare, naked*

to like, to enjoy *lonely, alone*

island, isle *still, yet*

2. Comment on the lexical distribution of the synonymic pairs:

a) *After dinner, we had a ripe/ mature Camembert cheese.*

She's a very mature person. (not a ripe person)

b) *The Danube is very broad/ wide at its mouth.*

He speaks with a broad Irish accent. (not a wide accent)

c) *They filled the small ditch with good soft earth/ soil.*

The drone fell back to earth due to battery failure. (not back to soil)

d) *The classy hotel stands in a superb location at the side/ edge of the lake.*

I mean we are literally on opposite sides of the world (not edges). She is in Colorado and I am in Australia.

3. Identify the type of correlative synonymic relations:

gain the upper hand / win; be in two minds / hesitate;

to be as black as coal / to be as black as midnight;

put up with / tolerate; put on / wear;

4. State whether the italicised words are prototypes or superordinates (or hyperonyms):

a. odour, scent, *smell*, bouquet, fragrance, perfume

b. ripe, mature, *adult*, grown-up

- c. cutlery, tea-pot, coffee-pot, sugar-bowl, *silver*;
- d. forks, knives, spoons, *cutlery*;
- e. to prohibit, *to forbid*, to interdict;
- f. *clear*, transparent, lucid, limpid;
- g. *clothes*, dress, attire, apparel, vesture;

3.3.3.4. Sources of synonymy

The English word-stock is extremely rich in synonyms which can be accounted for diachronically (borrowings and neologisms) and synchronically (technical terms, euphemisms and slang words).

1. Etymology

Synonymy can be approached both from a synchronic and from a diachronic point of view. The diachronic study is significant in clarifying the sources of synonymy and the status of words in contemporary English.

English displays a wide range of synonyms because its vocabulary comes from two primary sources: Old English, the language of the Anglo-Saxon invaders in the 5th and 6th centuries; and French or Latin, through the Norman conquest in the 11th century and the influence of the classical Latin following the 15th century Renaissance. (see section 2.2.).

In most cases, the native word is felt as neuter, being preferred to the foreign word in everyday conversation. In other cases, the native word bears the mark of spontaneity or of a psychological state:

Saxon words	Latin equivalents
<i>motherly and fatherly</i>	<i>maternal and paternal</i>
(higher emotive potential)	(polite conversation)
<i>friendship</i>	<i>amity</i>
(sincere and intense feeling)	(formal)

The specialisation of terms depends on the etymological criterion. For instance, in the pair of synonyms *righteous* and *just*, the word *righteous* is of Latin origin and it means ‘correct behaviour from the viewpoint of religious beliefs,’ while *just* is of Anglo-Saxon origin and its meaning is ‘imposing a moral viewpoint.’ Similarly, the French terms: *pork*, *beef*, *veal*, *venison* have specialised to denote the meat, while the Anglo-Saxon terms: *swine*, *bull*, *cow*, *calf*, *deer* denote the animals.

Synonymous words with different origins are organized in **double** or **triple scales of synonymy**. The language from which the word was borrowed is indicated (e.g. French), but not the origin of the etymon, which may be Greek or Latin.

Double scale in synonymy

In English, there are countless pairs of synonyms in which a native, Anglo-Saxon term co-exists with a term of Latin, French or Greek origin:

native	French	native	Latin
answer	reply	hearty	cordial
ask	request	lucky	fortunate
buy	purchase	player	actor
help	aid	wire	telegram
world	universe		
yearly	annual		

The native word is informal, while the borrowed term is learned. Native words are warmer, homelier than borrowed words in emotive meaning.

Triple scale in synonymy

A triple scale includes words of Anglo-Saxon origin and their synonyms borrowed from French, Latin or Greek:

native (Germanic)	French	Latin/Greek
abide	endure	tolerate
ask	question	interrogate
bold	impudent	audacious
breach	infringement	violation
begin	commence	initiate
choice	preference	predilection
dear	precious	valuable
dwell	reside	inhabit
end	finish	conclude
foretell	prophecy	predict
strength	power	energy

The native term is the simplest and most ordinary of the three terms. The Latin term is the learned one, whereas the French term stands between the native word and the Latin word.

Stylistically, native English words are informal. Words borrowed from French may be more formal or more literary than the native English words. Words borrowed from Latin may be academic words, technical words, or very formal words and those of Greek origin are nearly always technical words.

The same distinction between native and non-native near-synonyms is noticeable with phrasal verbs and verbs of French or Latin origin. The phrasal verb is less formal, the simple verb is formal:

They gave out the surplus food.
They distributed the surplus food.

2. Neologisms

Neologisms enrich the language and often lead to synonymy. Neologisms are newly coined words or phrases that may be commonly used in everyday life (see section 2.3.). They can be completely new words, new meanings for existing words or new senses in existing words. Here are some examples of neologisms that are finding their way into present-day English language.

Social Networking and Technology Neologisms

- google:** To use an online search engine as the basis for looking up information on the World Wide Web.
- 404:** Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web error message 404 Not Found, meaning that the requested document could not be located.
- spam:** Flooding the Internet with many copies of the same message, in an attempt to force the message on people who would not otherwise choose to receive it.
- app:** Software application for a smartphone or tablet computer.
- noob:** Someone who is new to an online community or game.
- troll:** An individual who posts inflammatory, rude, and obnoxious comments to an online community.
- ego surfer:** A person who boosts his ego by searching for his own name on Google and other search engines.

Popular Culture Neologisms

- Brangelina:** used to refer to supercouple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie.
- BFF:** stands for best friends forever. Used to state how close you are to another individual.
- chilax:** to calm down or relax, it is a slang term used when someone is starting to get uptight about something that is happening.

Neologisms point to the evolving nature of the English language.

3. Euphemisms

Euphemisms are also a source of synonymy. Euphemisms are words or phrases that avoid direct reference to taboo subjects. In such cases the denotation remains the same but the connotations are different:

standard word	euphemism
chaotic	unformed
illiterate	uneducated
mad	mental case
poor	underprivileged
fat	chubby
die	expire

There are words which are easy targets for euphemistic substitution (cf. Antrushina 1999: 210–216). The word *lavatory* has, naturally, produced many euphemisms: *powder room*, *washroom*, *restroom*, *retiring room*, *(public) comfort station*, *ladies' (room)*, *gentlemen's (room)*, *water-closet*, *w.c.*, *public conveniences* and even *Windsor castle* (which is a comical phrase for w.c.). Pregnancy is another topic for 'delicate' references. Here are some of the euphemisms used as substitutes for the adjective *pregnant*: *in an interesting condition*, *in a delicate condition*, *in the family way*, *with a baby coming*, *(big) with child*, *expecting*.

Euphemisms associated with drunkenness are very numerous. The adjective *drunk*, for instance, has a great number of such substitutes, some of them 'delicate,' but most comical. e. g. *intoxicated* (formal), *under the influence* (form.), *tipsy*, *mellow*, *fresh*, *high*, *merry*, *flustered*, *overcome*, *full* (coll.), *drunk as a lord* (coll.), *drunk as an owl* (coll.), *boiled* (sl.), *fried* (sl.), *tanked* (sl.), *tight* (sl.), *stiff* (sl.), *pickled* (sl.), *soaked* (sl.), *three sheets to the wind* (sl.), *high as a kite* (sl.), *half-seas-over* (sl.), etc.

While euphemisms are universal, **politically correct language** is employed to different degrees in the English-speaking countries. It was first developed, and recurrently used, in the United States, chiefly in official documents while Britain and other nations are less keen to right past wrongs.

New phrasal adjectives like *hearing impaired* ('deaf'), *mentally/physically challenged* and *visually impaired/ challenged* ('blind') have been coined for people with disabilities. However, some of these terms are also used to make fun of politically correct language, e.g. *residentially challenged* ('homeless'), *vertically challenged* ('short'), *horizontally challenged* ('fat') or *financially challenged* ('poor').

Another way of concealing the unpleasant truth is to use **jargon**. Such an example is **corporate jargon** which may be characterised by elaborations of common English phrases, meant to conceal the real meaning of what is being said. Corporate jargon is contrasted with plain English. For instance, when companies want to dismiss an employee, they use language that attempts to tone down or even disguise the effects of their actions:

plain English	corporate jargon
to dismiss/ to sack	to dispense with somebody's services
sacking	to offer somebody a career change opportunity
	destuffing, downsizing, outplacement, departure, workforce adjustment

Governments and industries are adept at using words to conceal what they are up to. In 1970, the nuclear power industry in US used instead of *explosion* 'an energetic disassembly' and instead of *fire* 'a rapid oxidation.'

4. Technical terms

Technical terms compete with traditional words and phrases contributing to the development of **professional jargons**, i.e. vocabularies which contain lexemes appropriate to professions, trades, sports, etc., but which are not part of everyday language.

The technical terminology or the specialist vocabulary includes words specific to the scientific or technical fields:

native	technical term
a lie detector	polygraph
checking accounts	audit
measure to force a country	sanction
payment of an account	settlement
heart	cardiac
injury	lesion
cut	incision

A **term** is a lexical unit that makes reference to a specific concept in science. In botanical terminology, for example, pairs of synonymous adjectives can be identified: a loanword (of Greek or Latin origin belonging to the International Scientific Vocabulary) and a native word. These are called **terminological synonyms**:

native

hand shaped

star shaped

ladderlike

loan

(Lat.) palmate

stellate

scalariform

5. Varieties of English.

Many synonymous words are related to life in various geographical areas. The dialects of English spoken in different parts of the world, include not only American and British English, but also such varieties as Australian English and New Zealand English, as well as the English spoken in various African and Asian countries. Examples of synonyms in BrE and AmE are:

British

Foreign Minister

reader

autumn

lorry

maize

aubergine

biscuit

crisps

barrister

American

Secretary of State

associate professor

fall

truck

corn

eggplant

cookie / cracker

chips; potato chips

lawyer

However, other varieties of the language also have influence on the English language. Australian English, for instance, is now providing a distinct set of terms that are coming into fashion, such as *this is my shout* meaning ‘please let me pay for you,’ as well as terms such as *down under* (meaning ‘Australia’) and the *bush* ‘in the wilderness,’ which are, to some extent, slang usage. Other examples of synonyms in varieties of English are:

British**English**

afternoon

barrister/solicitor

Wellington boots

American**English**

afternoon

attorney

rubbers

Australian**English**

arvo

lawyer

gum boots

New Zealand**English**

arvo

gum boots

Slang, the special vocabulary used by members of a particular group of people (e.g. schoolboy slang, student slang, etc.) and which includes dialectal words, is a major source of synonymy:

plain English

friend
tobacco
bad luck

slang

chap/chum
funk
ill speed

Slang words are subject to fashion: words come and go, they are used by one generation and forgotten by the next. Thus, the range of synonymic words that expressed approval in the past included: *cool, brill, heavy, ace, triff, def, wicked, awesome*. The rich variety of slang is illustrated in the following synonyms applied to police officers over the years in the United Kingdom and the United States: *bobby, bogey, busy, copper, filth, fuzz, grog, hawkshaw, mug, peeler, pigs, plod, rozzer, scuffer, shamus, sweeney, the law, the man*.

Slang terms are not perfect synonyms for other slang words. For instance, *smack, Chinese, H, horse* are slang terms for *heroine*. The term *junk* meaning ‘drugs’ in general or ‘heroine’ in particular, assumes negative connotations, which are not present in *smack* or *H*, and it is used by non-addicts. Thus, different contexts may highlight different shades of meaning. (cf. Mattiello 2008: 157–210)

6. Language style

Various language styles can be a source of synonymy. For instance, poetic style resorts to special vocabulary items:

plain English

evening
girl
often
happiness
dawn
sky
shining

poetic

eve
maid
oft
bliss
aurora
firmament
lucent

In such synonymous pairs the first term is standard in usage whereas the second one is archaic, only found in poetry and earlier writings.

Language style is defined as the choice of words used by a specific group of people. Examples of language style in professional English are: **bureaucratise** (the language characteristic of government bureaucracy, marked by excessive use of jargon, convoluted construction, and

periphrasis), **businessese** (the language typical of the world of business, characterised by use of jargon and abbreviation), **journalese** (the language typical of journalists and newspapers or magazines, marked by use of neologisms and unusual syntax), **legalese** (the language typical of lawyers, laws and legal forms, characterised by archaic usage, prolixity, and extreme thoroughness).

For instance, in English legal language near-synonyms may occur as **legal doublets** or **triplets**, i.e. a standardized phrase frequently used, consisting of two or more words that are near-synonyms. The origin of the doubling or tripling often lies in the transition of the legal language from Latin to French. Certain words were simply given in their Latin, French and/or English forms to ensure understanding. Such phrases can often be **pleonasms**:

legal doublets

alter or change
bind and obligate
care and attention
to have and to hold
final and conclusive
law and order
will and testament
null and void
sole and exclusive
legl and valid
part and parcel
uphold and support

legal triplets

cancel, annul and set aside
convey, transfer and set over
grant, bargain, sell
name, constitute and appoint
ordered, adjudged and decree
remise, release and forever quit claim
rest, residue and remainder

Synonymy is a mark of progress in the language, it enables people to express the subtlest ideas in a style appropriate to the context of the spoken or written communication.

Further reading

The best source of information about synonyms is the thesaurus itself, for instance: *Merriam-Webster's dictionary and thesaurus* (2006).

For a comprehensive list of British English and American English synonyms, see Modiano (1996: ch.2) and Schur (2007).

On euphemisms, see Holder's (1987) and Rawson's (1981) dictionaries.

On lexical items belonging to jargon, see Green's (2013) dictionary.

Online resources

Princeton University "About WordNet." WordNet. Princeton University. 2010.

(available at: <http://wordnet.princeton.edu>)

VisualThesaurus (available at: <http://visuwords.com>)

Self-assessed test 3.3.3.4.

1. Find American English equivalents of the following British English words:

aubergine, draughts, eraser, fortnight, full stop, interval, ladybird, parcel, porridge, post, roundabout, queue, tin, waistcoat.

2. Give the British English equivalents of the following American English words:

first floor, French fries, garbage, gear shift, pitcher, sidewalk, sneakers, trashcan.

3. Place the following words with related meanings on a scale from formal to informal:

mean, parsimonious, stingy, tight-arsed, ungenerous

FORMAL -----NEUTRAL----- INFORMAL

4. Account for the synonymic relation between the members of the following pairs of synonyms in terms of origin, dialect, style, register, and so on:

*afternoon / arvo; Foreign Minister / Secretary of State;
police officer / copper; illiterate / uneducated;
end / finish / conclude; sacking / destuffing;
drunk / intoxicated / tipsy / fried.*

5. Look up the origin of the following pairs of synonyms and organize them in double or triple scales of synonymy:

*sweat / perspire; guts / determination; pluck / courage;
clothes / attire; climb / ascend; book / volume; lie / perjury;
ill-will / malice; kind / gentle; holy / sacred / consecrated;
fire / flame / conflagration.*

6. Identify the source of synonymy in each pair:

*mere / lake; mother / minny; ranch / run; firm / secure;
drunk / elevated; forlorn / distressed; lie / distort the fact;
ire / anger; railway / railroad; charm / glamour.*

7. The medical jargon is known for its proliferation of technical vocabulary based on Latin and to a lesser extent on Greek. Read the list of technical words from the jargon of the medical profession and suggest an ordinary language synonym for each of them:

*convulsion, cranium, cardiac, incision, lesion, neurosis,
psychotic, trachea.*

8. Find examples of modern euphemisms. Determine the presently politically correct terms for people who are politically incorrectly called *blind*, *black* or *fat*.
9. For each of the following terms find several euphemisms which are less harsh, offensive, or explicit:

poor, crazy, crippled, fired from job.

10. Check the frequency of the following pairs of synonyms in a corpus of data and decide which item is more frequent:

*plan / scheme, trip / journey, attempt / try, book / volume,
lucky / fortunate, joyful / cheerful, leave / quit.*

3.3.4. Antonymy

Antonymy is defined as “oppositeness in meaning” (cf. Palmer 1976: 94). Antonyms are two words which belong to the same grammatical category

but which are opposed in meaning to each other. Antonyms are organized in pairs.

Antonymic pairs can be placed on an imaginary axis on which one of the terms represents the positive and the other one the negative value, for instance, the antonymic pair *good – bad*:

bad _____ | _____ good _____ excellent

The adjectives *good* vs *bad*, in contrast to *excellent* vs *bad*, are absolute antonyms since they are more or less equidistant from the midpoint on a scale of antonymy.

3.3.4.1. Root vs. derivational antonyms

According to their form, antonyms are grouped into root and derivational:

a. **Root antonyms** are also called **absolute** or **radical antonyms**. Examples are:

nouns cause / effect friend / enemy	adjectives good / evil hot / cold	verbs to come / to go to find / to lose
prepositions above / below	demonstratives this / that	adverbs here / there

Nouns that denote persons or animals of opposite sexes are also considered root antonyms: *man / woman*, *he-parrot / she-parrot*, *stallion / mare*.

b. **Derivational antonyms** (also called **affixal antonyms**) achieve the opposition through various affixes attached to a common stem. Negative prefixes provide the counterterms in the following pairs:

dis-	‘opposite of’	V. to appear / to disappear N. belief / disbelief
un-	‘not,’ ‘contrary to’	A. clear / unclear separable / unseparable skilled / unskilled

The allomorphs *in-*, *im-*, *il-*, *ir-* appear in such antonymic pairs as:

accessible / inaccessible
mature / immature

literate / illiterate
reducible / irreducible

The allomorphic variation depends on the first sound in the word to which the negative prefix is attached (see 1.1.2.5.).

Sometimes two prefixes may compete in providing the counterterm:

replaceable / unreplaceable / irreplaceable
reproachable / unproachable / irreproachable
sanitary / unsanitary / insanitary

Suffixes may also be used to form antonymic pairs: *hopeful* / *hopeless*, *careful* / *careless*, *remorseful* / *remorseless*, etc. For further examples of synonyms and antonyms, see any thesaurus.

3.3.4.2. Logical antonym types

Antonymy covers different types of oppositeness of meaning (cf. Löbner 2002: ch.5). Several **logical antonym types** have been identified:

a) gradable antonyms

This category includes adjectives: *beautiful* / *ugly*, *fast* / *slow*, *hot* / *cold*, *rich* / *poor*, *hot* / *cold*, *cheap* / *expensive*, etc. These pairs are called gradable because they express a more/less relation of oppositeness, i.e. they allow comparison and can be modified by intensifiers such as *very*, *rather*, *quite*, *too*, *extremely*, *extraordinarily*:

It is very/ extremely hot.

It is rather/quite/too cold.

The negation of one does not involve the assertion of the other antonym: *She is not beautiful* does not mean *She is ugly*.

b) contradictory or complementary antonyms:

These pairs are in an *either/or* relation of oppositeness (*asleep* / *awake*, *dead* / *alive*, *married* / *single*). An animate being can be either dead or alive, not a grade of a scale. The denial of one implies the assertion of the other:

If he is not asleep, he is awake.

If John is married, he is not single.

Complementary adjectives are not gradable, they do not permit the comparative, superlative, or modification by *very* (**more asleep*, **the most asleep*, **very asleep*). Other examples are *female* / *male*, *even* / *odd* (of numbers), *possible* / *impossible*, *free* / *occupied*, *true* / *false*. Prefixation with *un-* or *in-* is also used for the formation of complementary opposites. Complementarity more typically occurs with nouns, e.g. pairs of terms for persons of opposite sex, or pairs such as *member* / *non-member*, *official* / *non-official*. The meanings of two complementaries are identical except for one crucial feature in which they differ (cf. the examples *aunt* / *uncle* or *buy* / *rent*).

c) **converses**

The term *converse* denotes an equivalent mirror-image relation, in which the order of the arguments is reversed (*buy* / *sell*, *borrow* / *lend*, *give* / *receive*, *precede* / *follow*, *speak* / *listen*):

Jane bought a book from Helen.
Helen sold a book to Jane.

In these sentences the same transaction expressed by the antonymic pair *buy* and *sell* is seen from two different perspectives. The arguments may change positions in a sentence, the verb is replaced by its antonymic counterpart, but the sentences remain otherwise equivalent. One member expresses the converse meaning of the other, i.e., a different perspective on the same relation. Similarly, the pairs: *husband* / *wife*, *parent* / *child*, *doctor* / *patient* express social relationships:

John is Mary's husband. Mary is John's wife.

These sentences imply each other and therefore they have the same meaning. Pairs of converses are also the result of the derivations of nouns from verbs with the suffixes *-er* and *-ee*, such as: *employer* / *employee*, *trainer* / *trainee*, etc.

d) **directional opposites**

Pairs like *before* / *after*, *below* / *above*, *behind* / *in front of* are related to spatial position or direction. This type of relation is also known as **directional** opposition (cf. Löbner 2002: 91). Directional opposites are linked to opposite directions on a common axis, which may be either a vertical axis: (*top* / *bottom*, *high* / *low*, *up* / *down*, *upstairs* / *downstairs*,

uphill / downhill, rise / fall, ascend / descend and many more), or a horizontal one (*forwards / backwards, advance / retreat*).

A similar example is the time axis. Things may happen ‘before’ or ‘after’ a certain time. Directional opposites related to the time axis are: *before / after, past / future, since / until, yesterday / tomorrow, last / next, precede / follow*. Also related to time are pairs of directional opposites like *tie / untie, pack / unpack, wrap / unwrap, dress / undress, put on / put off, get on / get off, switch on / switch off, embark / disembark, charge / discharge, enter / leave, begin / stop, start / finish, fall asleep / wake up, appear / disappear, open / close*, and many more. One member, for instance, *fall asleep*, denotes the bringing about of a certain state, while the other member, *wake up*, denotes an action by which the state is ended.

Oppositeness is a meaning relation that has an important role in structuring the vocabulary of a language. Word classes can be correlated with certain types of antonyms. Thus, antonymy is typically found among adjectives. In the **adjective word class**, most antonyms are gradable (*clean / dirty*), some are complementary (*open / shut*). Gradable antonyms are also found among adverbs derived from adjectives (*slowly / quickly, frequently / rarely, closely / distantly*).

Other word classes, like nouns and verbs also contain antonymic pairs, but they are fewer in number and they are of the complementary and converse type only. The **noun class** contains some complementary antonymic pairs (*sloth / diligence, joy / sadness, sleep / insomnia*) and some converse pairs (*teacher / student, parent / child, employer / employee*). The **verb class** contains complementary antonyms (*go / stay, float / sink, gather / scatter*) and converses (*send / receive, belong to / own*).

3.3.4.3. Antonymy and corpus-research

Interest in antonymy has shifted away from the logical properties of the antonymic relations and its subtypes to its role in discourse. This new approach to antonymy comes from corpus-based research. The most comprehensive work on **the discourse functions of antonymy** has been Jones’s (2002). He examines the patterns (or frameworks) in which antonyms occur in journalistic language and thus identifies eight new types of antonymous relations:

Ancillary antonyms function as lexical signals. They serve an “ancillary” role, helping us to process another, perhaps more important, opposition nearby:

Broadly speaking, the community charge was *popular* with Conservative voters and *unpopular* with Labour voters.

Comparative antonymy

This function of antonymy is often expressed by a lexico-syntactic framework such as *more X than Y* or *X is more [adjective] than Y*:

‘Well,’ said Cage, ‘some living composers are more *dead* than *alive*.

Co-ordinated antonymy

The antonymous pair is presented in a unified, co-ordinated context. Mostly, antonyms which serve this role are conjoined by *and* or *or*:

He showed no disloyalty, *publicly* or *privately*, to Virginia...

Distinguished antonymy

The framework which houses the antonyms is *n between X and Y*, where *n* is difference or a synonym thereof:

...he still doesn’t know *the difference between right and wrong*

Extreme antonymy

Typical frameworks show antonyms linked by *or* or *and*, and premodified by an extremity-signalling adverb such as *very* or *too*:

No-one can afford to go to law except the *very rich* and the *very poor* and it can’t possibly get any worse.

Idiomatic antonymy

Many antonymous pairs co-occur as part of a familiar expression, proverb or cliché:

The long and the short of it is that height counts.

Negated antonymy

The sentences negate one antonym in order to place additional emphasis on the other or to identify a rejected alternative. The most common framework for this class is *X not Y*:

Well, without the combination of an arms race and a network of treaties designed for *war, not peace*, it would not have started.

Transitional antonymy

The function of antonyms belonging to this category is to help describe a movement from one state to another. This transition is usually expressed by a framework such as *from X to Y* or hinges around the verb *to turn*:

Her film career similarly has lurched *from success to failure*, with enormous periods out of work.

Data show that the two most common text-based classes of antonymy are Co-ordinated Antonymy (in which antonyms are joined by *and* or *or* and express exhaustiveness or inclusiveness) and Ancillary Antonymy (in which antonyms act as a lexical signal of a further, nearby contrast).

Further reading

Introductory reading on antonymy in Hurford et al (2007: unit 11). For a discussion of the main issues related to antonymy, see Cruse (1986: ch. 9, ch. 10) and Cruse (2000: ch.9), Lyons (1977: §9.1–9.3.). For more advanced reading on types of antonymy and contrast, see Murphy (2003: ch. 5).

Self-assessed test 3.3.4.

1. Give the antonyms of the following words:

downstairs, subtraction, hospitable, likely, benefactor, literate

2. Use negative prefixes to form noun antonyms:

<i>aggression</i>	<i>accuracy</i>	<i>behaviour</i>	<i>combatant</i>
<i>conduct</i>	<i>legibility</i>	<i>match</i>	<i>pronunciation</i>
<i>precision</i>	<i>regularity</i>	<i>official</i>	<i>kindness</i>

3. State which of the following antonymous words are strict bi-polar oppositions and which are oppositions admitting gradations:

<i>male / female</i> (bi-polar opposition)	<i>correct / incorrect</i>
<i>clean / dirty</i>	<i>alive / dead</i>
<i>young / old</i>	<i>big / small</i>
<i>joy / sorrow</i>	<i>to buy / to sell</i>

4. Give a word with a converse relation to the following:

*host, author, buyer, doctor, interviewer, student,
prosecutor, tenant, clerk.*

5. State whether the following pairs of antonyms are contradictory or converses:

*true / false; to give / to take; open / closed;
employee / employer; innocent / guilty;
to reject / to accept; bridegroom / bride.*

6. Which of the following are gradable antonyms, which are complementary pairs and which are converses?

*alive / dead; dark / light; beautiful / ugly; captive / free;
fall / rise; simple / difficult; lend / borrow; give / get;
give / take; absent / present; fixed / loose.*

7. Match the following examples with Jones's (2002) frameworks in which antonyms can occur:

antonymy: ancillary, coordinated, comparative, distinguished,
transitional, negated, extreme, idiomatic

- a) those who succeed more than they fail*
- b) to facilitate the re-establishment of peace, not war*
- c) how easy to slip from the legal to the illegal trade*
- d) stamps are popular, but collecting is unpopular*
- e) the policy is to recruit skilled and unskilled workers*
- f) the gap between rich and poor has widened*
- g) except when the soil is too wet or too dry*
- h) it was not permissible to blow hot and cold in the attitude one adopted*
- i) if you look at employment, not unemployment*
- j) children understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.*
- k) the difficult and costly transition from old to new technology.*
- l) much more is recovered unofficially than officially*

3.4. Formal identity vs. multiplicity of senses

In this section, we will briefly examine unrelated lexemes with identical spelling or pronunciation and lexemes with multiple meanings and we will highlight the differences between the two types.

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total homophones would be the noun pairs: *tail* / *tale*, *story* / *storey*, *hour* / *our*, *flour* / *flower*, *buy* / *by* / *bye*, or *cue* / *queue*. Partial homophones are numerous: *threw* / *through*, *write* / *right*, *there* / *their*, *whole* / *hole*, *to* / *two* / *too* and so on.

Sometimes homophones are identifiable across varieties of English. For example, some Scots and New Zealanders pronounce *pull* and *pool* identically; speakers from the south-east of England and Australia, but not from America, pronounce *father* and *farther* identically; some Scots and Canadians distinguish between *tide* and *tied*; etc. (cf. Bauer 1998c: 37)

b. Homographs

Homonymy with respect to the written form is known as **homography**: V. *tear* [tɛə] / N. *tear* [tiə]; V. *wind* [waɪnd] / N. *wind* [wɪnd]; V. *wound* [waʊnd] / N. *wound* [wʊnd]. Homonyms with different pronunciations, but identical spelling are known as **homographs**.

A special type of homographs is that of capitonyms. A **capitonym** is a word that changes its meaning (and sometimes pronunciation) when it is capitalized, such as *march* and *March*, personal names (*Mark* / *mark*), place-names (*China* / *china*), company names (*Fiat* / *fiat*), names of publications (*Time* / *time*) etc.

3.4.1.2. Sources of homonymy

The main sources of homonymy are: phonetic changes, borrowings and split polysemy (cf. Antrushina 1999: 168–173).

a) **Phonetic changes**. In their historical development words undergo *phonetic changes*. As a result of such changes, two or more words which were formerly pronounced differently may develop identical sound forms and thus become homonyms. For example, the homonyms *knight* and *night*:

Old English	<i>cniht</i>	/ 'kniçt/	>	<i>knight</i>	/ nait/
Old English	<i>niht</i>	/ 'niçt/	>	<i>night</i>	/ nait/

The homophones *knight* and *night* were not homonyms in Old English as the initial consonant *k* in the Old English word *cniht* was pronounced, and not dropped, as it is in its modern sound form.

b) **Borrowing** is another source of homonymy. A borrowed word may, in the final stage of its phonetic adaptation, duplicate in form either a native word or another borrowing. For instance, in the group of homonyms:

Old English vb. *writan* > to write

Old English adj. *riht* > right

Latin n. *rītus* > Old French *rit(e)* > rite

the verb and then adjective are of native, Germanic origin whereas *rite* is an indirect Latin borrowing. Similar examples are: *fair*, adj. ('fair') is native, and *fair*, n. ('a gathering of buyers and sellers') is a French borrowing. *Match*, n. ('a game; a contest of skill, strength') is native, and *match*, n. ('a slender short piece of wood used for producing fire') is a French borrowing.

The common feature of these sources of homonyms is that the homonyms developed from two or more different words, and their similarity is purely accidental.

c) **Split polysemy.** This source of homonyms differs essentially from the above cases. Two or more homonyms can originate from different meanings of the same word. The meanings of a polysemantic word are held together by logical associations. If, for some reason, the unifying meaning disappears, then the other meanings are accepted as independent lexical units. Let us consider the history of three homonyms:

*board*₁ n. 'a long and thin piece of timber'

*board*₂ n. 'daily meals, esp. as provided for pay' (e.g. *room and board*)

*board*₃ n. 'an official group of persons who direct or supervise'

Board was initially a polysemantic word that also meant 'a piece of furniture, a table,' where people had their meals or where they could gather. But this meaning was lost when the French Norman word *table* was borrowed into English. As a result, the connection between the meaning of *board*₁ and the meaning of *board*₂ was lost and the nouns *board*₂ and *board*₃ were felt to be independent lexical units, homonyms.

A somewhat different case of split polysemy may be illustrated by the three following homonyms:

spring, n. 'the act of springing, a leap'

spring, n. 'a place where a stream of water comes up out of the earth'

spring, n. 'a season of the year'

Historically all three nouns originate from the same verb with the meaning of 'to jump, to leap' (OE *springan*), so that the meaning of the first homonym is the oldest. The meanings of the other two homonyms were

originally based on metaphor (the water sometimes leaps up out of the earth and the season following winter could be poetically defined as *a leap* from the cold of winter into sunlight and life). However, the metaphorical associations have been forgotten and the other nouns are now felt to be independent lexical units.

Further reading

More on homonymy, in Lyons (1977: §9.4); Lyons (1981: 43–47); Lyons (1995: 54–60); Leech (1981: 227–229); and Lipka (1992: §4.2.3.) – among others.

Self-assessed test 3.4.1.

1. Fill in the gaps with the correct homophone given in brackets:

- a) *There is also a kind of birds called birds of... (pray, prey).*
- b) *He always does everything on ... (principal, principle).*
- c) *He was so upset that he gave...to his anger.(rain, rein, reign)*
- d) *I want to...you for your delicious meal (complement, compliment)*
- e) *All those opposed should say ... (nay, neigh)*
- f) *A favourite orange is a ... (naval, navel)*
- g) *She was the prima ballerina in the ... de ballet. (core, corps)*
- h) *Fabric ... takes a lot of skill. (dying, dyeing)*
- i) *She was overcome by a fit of ... (peak, peek, pique)*
- j) *The teacher stayed after school to...the student (council, counsel)*

2. Find perfect homophones for the words given below and make up sentences with them:

<i>beat</i>	<i>brake</i>	<i>cent</i>	<i>eye</i>
<i>heir</i>	<i>hire</i>	<i>illicit</i>	<i>mane</i>
<i>plait</i>	<i>poll</i>	<i>rite</i>	<i>rode</i>
<i>tied</i>	<i>tier</i>	<i>wave</i>	<i>won</i>

3. Identify the different meanings and indicate the pronunciation of the following homographs: *sow, lead, rose, wind*.

4. Find homonyms in the following pairs of sentences and define their types:

- a) *Excuse my going first, I'll lead the way.*
Lead is heavier than iron.
- b) *He tears up all the documents.*
Her eyes filled with tears.
- c) *The Prince of Wales is the heir to the throne.*
They walked and had some fresh air.
- d) *They took two suites at the hotel.*
Children like sweets.
- e) *They saw him saw through that plank of wood.*
Betty looked pale when she walked towards the pail.

5. The following poems, of unknown origin, are examples of the use of captonyms. Comment on the meaning of the captonyms:

Job's Job

In August, an august patriarch
Was reading an ad in Reading, Mass.
Long-suffering Job secured a job
To polish piles of Polish brass.

Herb's Herbs

An herb store owner, name of Herb,
Moved to a rainier Mount Rainier.
It would have been so nice in Nice,
And even tangier in Tangier.

(from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitonym>)

3.4.2. Polysemy

Polysemy may be briefly defined as 'multiplicity of meaning.' A single lexeme with two or more related senses is said to be a **polyseme** or it is **polysemous**. Consider the lexeme *head* with its various senses:

He hit his head on the ceiling.	'body part'
the head of the page/ pin	'the upper end of something'
the head of our Department	'a position of leadership or authority'

The meanings 'body part,' 'upper end' and 'position of authority' are related to one another, so the lexeme *head* is a polyseme with three senses.

3.4.2.1. Relationships between polysemous senses

A large proportion of a language's vocabulary is **polysemic** (or **polysemous**). There are various relationships which may hold between polysemous senses. For instance, they may be related by hyponymy (the more specific sense is included in the more general one, as in the case of *drink* (the sense 'imbibe alcoholic beverage' is a hyponym of 'imbibe liquid') or *dog* ('male canine animal' is a hyponym of 'canine animal'). Several polysemous relations involve a contrast between **literal** and **figurative** meanings of a word. The figurative meaning may be based on metaphor, metonymy or hyperbole, as illustrated below:

- **metaphorical**, as in *position* ('location in space,' 'opinion on some controversial issue,' and 'professional post within an organisation'),
- **metonymic**, as in *wheels* ('revolving parts of a mechanism in contact with ground' and 'car'),
- **hyperbolic**, as in *fantastic* ('so extreme as to challenge belief' and 'a generalised term of approval')

3.4.2.2. The distinction between homonyms and polysemantic words

Polysemy is a relation between senses associated with a single lexeme, while homonymy is a relation between different lexemes that are coincidentally similar in phonological form. The distinction between polysemy and homonymy is a well-known semantic problem. Consider the noun *bank* in: *river bank*, *bank of England* and the noun *bed* in: *river bed*, *hospital bed*. Are these polysemous or homonymous nouns?

In the following examples the lexical item *bank* is used as a polysemous word, i.e. a word with several related meanings:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| The bank was flooded yesterday. | (building) |
| The bank was very nice and understanding. | (personnel) |
| The bank was founded in 1990. | (institution) |

The difference between these examples can be explained in terms of *facets* (cf. Cruse 2000: ch. 6.5). *Bank* refers to a physical object with at least three facets: the *premises*, the *personnel*, the *institution*. Since all meanings are linked by the object they refer to, this sort of polysemy may be called **referential polysemy**. However, the word *bank* can also be used metaphorically in:

I am the bank (when playing Monopoly) (playing a role in a game)
 a blood bank, a memory bank (a place where something is stored)

The meaning of *bank* can be explained by means of a metaphorical link or an extension: *Monopoly* (metaphor), *store something* (metaphor).

In the following examples the word *bank* is a homonym, unrelated in meaning to the word *bank* previously discussed:

a river bank (the rising ground bordering a river)
 We were protected by a bank of two feet high. (a small flat mound)

Thus, some words may refer to several aspects of an object (referential polysemy), some to a number of resembling objects (lexical polysemy), others to unconnected objects (homonymy).

Polysemy and homonymy can be entirely explained in terms of reference. Polysemy is of two types:

- a. **Referential polysemy** (when a word refers to several aspects of an object)
- b. **Lexical polysemy** (when words refer to objects which we think of as being somehow related, or to resembling objects. For example:

<i>mouse</i>	‘rodent’ (a small animal)
<i>computer-mouse</i>	‘an object in the shape of a mouse’

The similarity between the original object and a new object named after it is based on a metonymical or metaphorical link.

The criteria used to distinguish between homonyms and polysemous words may be summarized as in Lyons (1977: §13.4).

Relatedness of meaning

Homonymous words share no meaning whatsoever; they function as two totally unrelated words, such as: *bark*₁ (the sound of a dog), *bark*₂ (the skin of a tree).

In contrast in the case of polysemantic words, there is some semantic linking: *river bed* and *hospital bed*. That is why most dictionaries list polysemantic words under one entry and homonyms under several entries.

Etymological evidence

Homonymous items have different etymological roots (*skate* ‘glide on ice’ and *skate* ‘the fish’), while polysemous lexemes usually go back to a single etymon, such as: *mouth* (of a river) and *mouth* (of an animal).

Formal identity

Homonymous words and polysemantic words can be identical in form, however, polysemous words have the same form with a range of different but related meanings, while homonyms can show differences in spelling, or pronunciation.

To conclude, polysemy is the term for multiple meanings in a word that are connected historically or semantically. It contrasts with homonymy, when unrelated words just happen to be spelled or pronounced alike. Polysemy comes about when semantic changes add new meanings without taking away the old one. Changes are often the result of a mental association, usually involving metaphor (resemblance) or metonymy (other incidental connection).

The boundary between polysemy and homonymy cannot be drawn precisely. This is obvious in the way the same word may be listed as a polysemic expression in one dictionary, but as a homonym in another.

Further reading

Elementary reading on polysemy and homonymy, in Jackson and Amvela (2004: 3.4 –3.5).

On paradigmatic sense relations, including the distinction between polysemy and homonymy, see also Cruse (2000: ch. 6.5.); Lipka (1992: §4.2.3.); Leech (1981); and Lyons (1981, 1995) – among others.

Self-assessed test 3.4.2

1. Look up the entries of the following polysemantic words in three dictionaries of your choice and discuss the sense distinctions:

face, idle, deep, remote, party, dream, child, head

2. Find the meanings of the polysemous lexemes then look up the words in a dictionary and check your answers and make sentences with each. Explain how context helps to distinguish their actual meanings:

blind, code, figure, game, ground, line, term, wave

3. Discuss the following words with the meanings indicated: do they constitute a case of polysemy or homonymy? Try to determine the historical sources:

<i>fraud</i>	‘act of deceiving’ vs ‘person who deceives’
<i>point</i>	‘sharp end of something’ (a knife) vs ‘dot used in writing’
<i>character</i>	‘mental or moral qualities of a person’ vs ‘letter’
<i>ring</i>	‘circular band of metal’ vs ‘telephone call’
<i>bed</i>	‘furniture’ vs. ‘area of ground in the garden’
<i>club</i>	‘stick’ vs ‘organisation’
<i>face</i>	‘front part of the head’ vs ‘outward appearance’
<i>coat</i>	‘garment,’ ‘a covering of paint’
<i>sole</i>	‘the bottom surface of a shoe,’ ‘only,’ a type of fish’

4. Account for the related meanings of the polysemous word *Romania*, in terms of facets:

Romania lies in Eastern Europe.

Romania has signed the Arms Trade Treaty.

Romania protests: hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to fight against corruption.

3.4.3. Paronymy

Paronymy is broadly understood as a lexical relation between two or more items within one language, which are semantically related, have a similar or identical morphological root and different suffixes: *effective* – *efficient*, *sensible* – *sensitive*, *beautiful* – *beauteous*, etc.

Paronyms are linked not only by similarity of form but also by similar meaning potential, hence they are easily confused for one another by native speakers and language learners. Paronyms always have a different spelling, and never fully match in pronunciation.

Morphologically, paronyms differ in the type and number of affixes attached: *sensible* – *sensitive* differ in one suffix, *revolution* – *involution* differ in one prefix, *sensational* – *sensitive* differ in two suffixes.

Structurally, paronyms can be divided into two groups:

- a) paronyms with the same root but different derivational affixes:

affect – effect
 alternately – alternatively
 anterior – interior
 beneficial -- beneficent
 preposition – proposition

popular – populous
 upmost – utmost
 momentary – momentous
 official – officious
 sensual – sensuous

b) paronyms from different roots, but with the same derivational affix:

collision – collusion
 complement – compliment
 conjuncture – conjecture
 continuous – contiguous
 deprecate – depreciate
 farther (or farthest) – further (or furthest)
 ingenious – ingenuous

Etymologically, paronyms are derived from the same root or from different roots. For example, the paronyms *sensible* and *sensitive* developed from two different Latin words:

Latin word *sensibilis* > *sensible* ‘perceptible to the mind’
 Latin word *sensitivus* > *sensitive* ‘responding to stimulation’

In a pair of paronyms, one member can be the basis of derivation for another member:

comic > comical	classic > classical
economic > economical	electric > electrical

Several pairs of adjectives ending in the suffix *-ic* or *-ical* exhibit differences in meaning and even collocation:

a classic example of humour	classical music
a comic opera	a comical appearance
economic approach	economical use of electricity
electric current	electrical kettle
historic event	a historical novel
lyric poetry	a lyrical description of her experiences

Paronyms are kindred both in sound form and in meaning and therefore mistakenly interchanged.

Further reading

For basic knowledge on the distinction between paronyms and between competing forms (e.g. *admission/ admittance*), see dictionaries of usage (Brooks 2015; Garner 2003). On paronyms in varieties of English, see Draäghetel (2000).

Self-assessed test 3.4.3.

1. Give the meaning of the following paronyms and provide a context for each of them:

*centenary – centennial; cheerful – cheery; childish – childlike;
comprehensible – comprehensive; exterior – external;
judicial – judicious; luxuriant – luxurious; purposefully – purposely;
seasonable – seasonal; continuous – continual; womanly – womanish*

2. Look up the following paronyms in an online dictionary (<http://www.dictionary.com>) and distinguish between them semantically and etymologically:

<i>momentary – momentous</i>	<i>factitious – fictitious</i>
<i>complement – compliment</i>	<i>corporeal – corporeal</i>
<i>defective – deficient</i>	<i>councillor – counsellor</i>
<i>practical – practicable</i>	<i>amiable – amicable</i>
<i>human – humane</i>	

3. Analyse the following paronyms morphologically and group them into:

- a) identical root + different affixes
- b) different roots + identical affixes
- c) base + suffix = derivative

*alternatively – alternately, amoral – immoral, ardent – arduous,
imaginary – imaginative, earthly – earthy, historic – historical,
nutritional – nutritious, prescribe – proscribe, stationary – stationery.*

3.5. Lexical fields and the components of meaning

In the previous sections, we have pointed out that the vocabulary of a language is not a simple collection of words; it is partly structured by sense relations at the paradigmatic and syntagmatic level.

In this section, we will look at an alternative approach to structuring the vocabulary—the thematic groupings of words—known as lexical fields, whose members are linked through individual lexical relations of synonymy, hyponymy and so on. We will also explore the semantic components of meaning shared by the members of the lexical fields.

3.5.1. Lexical fields

Crystal (1995: 157) defines a lexical field as an area of meaning in which lexemes interrelate and define each other in specific ways. It has been argued that the sense of a lexeme is determined by the network of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations that hold between a lexeme and its neighbours in the same lexical field (Lyons 1981: 155).

Lexical items whose meanings have something in common form groups with other lexemes. These groups of lexemes are called **lexical fields** or **semantic fields**. There is, however, ambiguity in the use of these terms. The distinction is that ‘semantic/conceptual fields’ include all concepts related to a semantic area, while lexical fields are subsets of semantic fields including only those concepts that have words attached to them (cf. Coşeriu & Gekeler 1981). Moreover, lexical fields are part of the organisation of the vocabulary in a given language, while conceptual fields, apply generally across languages.

Both paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations are relevant to determine word meanings in a lexical field, an idea that derives from the work of the Swiss scholar, Saussure. A **lexical field** is a coherent subset of the vocabulary whose members are interlinked by paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations of **sense**.

This approach to word meaning is sometimes referred to as **lexical field theory**. As an example, the meaning of *dog* is determined partly by its paradigmatic relations. For instance, it has *cat*, *mouse*, *bear* and *lion* as **incompatibles**, *spaniel*, *Pekinese*, and *collie* as **hyponyms**, *tail*, *paw*, and *dewlap* as **meronyms**, and is itself a hyponym of *mammal*, *animal*, *living thing* and so on. (Fields can be nested within more inclusive fields.) Also relevant are its syntagmatic relations with words like *bark*, *whine*, and *growl*, to mention but a few (cf. Cruse 2006).

The terms of a lexical field are in a certain semantic relationship due to a unifying **theme**, **idea** or **subject matter** such as body parts, landforms, diseases, colours, foods, or kinship relations.

The lexemes of a lexical field are of the same word class (i.e. they are all nouns, or all adjectives, etc.), and they are interrelated by precisely

definable meaning relations. For example, the lexical field of colour terms includes the adjectives: *white, blue, yellow, green, brown, red, orange, violet, black*, etc.

Internally, lexical fields may be organized as a **hierarchy** (e.g. the lexical field of royalty, military ranks), as a **meronymy** (e.g. the lexical field of body parts), as a **sequence** (e.g. numbers), or as a **cycle** (e.g. days of the week, months of the year), as well as with no discernible order. A thesaurus is generally organized according to substantive fields (although it also makes use of hyponymy and synonymy).

The words which are part of a lexical field enter in sense or meaning relationships with one another. Each word delimits the meaning of the next word in the field. However, there may be a fair amount of overlap in meaning between words in a domain. Within a lexical field, some words are **marked**, while others are **unmarked**; the unmarked members are more frequent, more basic, broader in meaning, easier to learn and remember, not metaphorical, and typically one morpheme or single lexical item. The marked members often consist of more than one lexical item and may denote a subtype of the unmarked member. Here are some examples of lexical fields from Brinton and Brinton (2010: ch. 6.4).

The field of ‘parts of the face’ is a substantive field of part to whole:

forehead	brow	temples
nose	nostrils	bridge/ tip of the nose
septum	mouth	lips
eyes	eyebrows	eyelashes
chin	cheeks	jaw / jowls

Terms within the field are arranged spatially and are quite clearly delimited, though there is some overlap between terms such as *forehead* and *temple*. Terms such as *bridge of the nose* or *eyelids* would constitute marked members of the field.

The field of ‘stages of life’ is arranged sequentially:

new-born, infant, nursling / suckling, baby / babe, child / kid, toddler / tot, pre-schooler, youngster, adolescent, youth, lad / lass, preteen, teenager / teen, juvenile, minor

young adult, adult, grown up person, middle aged citizen, senior citizen, mature person, aged person, senior citizen / senior, old {lady, man, person}, sexagenarian, septuagenarian, octogenarian, nonagenarian, centenarian

Note that a term such a *minor* or *juvenile* belongs to a technical register, a term such as *kid* or *tot* to a colloquial register, and a term such as *sexagenarian* or *octogenarian* to a more formal register.

The field of ‘water’ could be divided into several subfields:

forms: *ice, water, steam, vapor, sleet, rain, snow, hail*

bodies of water: *ditch, slough, swamp, narrows, strait, inlet, bight, bayou, brine, deep, firth, loch, tarn, well, reservoir, firth, pool, sea, ocean, lake, pond, bay, inlet, estuary, fjord, sound, gulf, lagoon, cove, harbour*

frozen water: *ice, snow, crystal, sleet, hail, icicle, iceberg, rime, hoarfrost, glacier*

gas: *vapor, steam*

In addition, there would appear to be a great deal of overlap between terms such as *sound/fjord* or *cove/harbour/bay*.

The notion of lexical field has been relevant to lexicography by suggesting an alternative to the traditional approach, namely, using the alphabetical order in listing the lexemes in a dictionary. This alternative is a thesaurus, which relies on grouping lexemes thematically (see section 3.6.2.).

Further reading

Lehrer (1974) is a general study of semantic fields and the structure of the lexicon; it contains a discussion of cooking terms in English and other languages. On lexical fields, see also Lipka (1992: §4.2.4.).

On the Saussurean structuralist view on the vocabulary, and on the semantic fields in terms of sense relations, see Lyons (1977: ch.8, ch.9).

Self-assessed test 3.5.1.

The lexical field of ‘clothing’ is a rich one, with many unmarked terms (such as *dress* or *pants*) as well as many marked terms (such as *smoking, shawl*). Find the terms of this lexical field and organize them on different criteria: a) by body part covered; b) by occasion of wearing; c) by wearer (age, sex); d) by fabric.

3.5.2. The componential analysis of meaning

Another way of defining a word is to decompose its meaning into a set of semantic elements or features. This method has been known as the componential analysis of meaning.

The basic elements of the meaning are called **semantic components**, **semantic primitives**, **semantic markers** or **semes**. For example, the meaning of the lexeme *boy* is said to include the components ‘human,’ ‘non-adult,’ ‘male.’ The component ‘human’ distinguishes the lexeme *boy* from non-human creatures; the component ‘non-adult’ distinguishes *boy* from *man*; the component ‘male’ distinguishes *boy* from *girl*. Components such as these are sometimes presented as either/or (i.e. binary) choices, conventionally written in capital letters and placed in square brackets, e. g. [+HUMAN] [-HUMAN]. The meaning of *boy* would then be expressed by the components [+HUMAN], [-ADULT], [+MALE].

Components have a distinguishing function, i.e. they serve to distinguish the meaning of a lexeme from that of semantically related lexemes. For instance, the semantic components [MALE] and [ADULT], used in plus or minus terms, serve to distinguish between the meanings of the lexemes: *boy*, *girl*, *man*, *woman*:

boy: [-ADULT], [+MALE]
girl: [-ADULT], [-MALE]
man: [+ADULT], [+MALE]
woman: [+ADULT], [-MALE]

The study of the semantic components has been related to terms belonging to the same lexical field. The **semes** (markers or semantic components) are abstract theoretical entities, dimensions regarded as characterizing the respective field. Among the basic semantic components of the lexical fields there are semes indicating the dimensions: [ABSTRACT], [ANIMATE], [HUMAN], [SEX], [ADULT], [GENERATION], [LINE], [RANK].

The componential analysis of meaning is fruitful to various **lexical fields**. One of the major lexical fields that has been studied in the English language is that of the kinship system, i.e. terms denoting family members.

The lexical field of kinship terms in English includes the following terms: *grandfather*, *grandmother*, *father*, *mother*, *uncle*, *aunt*, *brother*, *sister*, *cousin*, *she-cousin*, *son*, *daughter*, *grandson*, *granddaughter*, *mother-in-law*, *brother-in-law*, *nephew*, *niece*, etc.

The semantic markers used in the componential analysis of the meaning of these terms are: consanguinity, line, generation and rank. Note that kinship terms are conventionally described in relation to a given person, termed ‘ego,’ the Latin equivalent of the first-person pronoun *I*.

- a. Consanguinity is a semantic component that expresses the origin of family relationships:

[+ CONSANGUINITY] meaning 'blood relationships'
 [- CONSANGUINITY] 'relationship by alliance'

- b. Line is a semantic component distinguishing between the direct line and the indirect line:

[+ LINE] indicating ancestors or descendants of the ego
 [- LINE] including all other family relations

- c. Generation is a dimension that has the ego marked [GENERATION 0] as a point of reference, the ascending generation [GENERATION +1] and [GENERATION +2] from the first generation to the ego and the descending generations [GENERATION -1] and [GENERATION -2].
- d. Rank is a dimension indicating a position in relation to others. It consists of direct relationships marked [+DIRECT] and indirect relationships marked [-DIRECT]. Direct relationships are not mediated, while indirect relationships are mediated by other family members.

The componential analysis of the meaning of kinship terms is illustrated below:

<i>grandfather:</i>	[+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE], [GENERATION+2], [+MALE], [-DIRECT]
<i>mother:</i>	[+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE], [GENERATION+1], [-MALE], [+DIRECT]
<i>uncle:</i>	[-CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION+1], [+MALE], [-DIRECT]
<i>sister:</i>	[+CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION 0], [-MALE], [-DIRECT]
<i>she-cousin:</i>	[-CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION 0], [-MALE], [-DIRECT]
<i>son:</i>	[+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE], [GENERATION-1], [+MALE], [+DIRECT]
<i>grandson:</i>	[+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE], [GENERATION-2], [+MALE], [-DIRECT]

Thus, each kinship term has a unique analysis based on binary choices from four semantic components. These components have a distinguishing function, namely, they serve to differentiate among the meanings of lexemes in the same semantic domain.

There are two types of components: those that are shared by all the lexemes in a semantic domain, termed **common components**, and those that distinguish lexemes from one another, called **diagnostic components**. For instance, the meanings of the lexemes in the limited domain of *man*, *woman*, *boy* and *girl* have the common semantic component [HUMAN] and the diagnostic components [ADULT] and [MALE].

In a more elaborate analysis of meaning, **grammatical features** like [+N] and [+COUNTABLE] can be added to the semantic features:

mother: [+N], [+COUNTABLE], [+CONCRETE], [+ANIMATE],
 [+HUMAN], [-MALE], [+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE],
 [GENERATION+1], [+DIRECT]

An accurate analysis of the meaning of the lexemes should also take into consideration **relational components**. These are semantic components representing relations between or among the terms analysed:

<i>father</i> :	X Parent of Y and Male X
<i>mother</i> :	X Parent of Y and Female X
<i>son</i> :	X Child of Y and Male X
<i>daughter</i> :	X Child of Y and Female X
<i>brother</i> :	X Child of Parent of Y and Male X
<i>sister</i> :	X Child of Parent of Y and Female X

Thus, the componential analysis of the meaning of a kinship term like *father* may include grammatical features, semantic components and relational components, as illustrated below:

father: [+N], [+COUNTABLE], [+CONCRETE], [+ANIMATE],
 [+HUMAN], [+MALE], [+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE],
 [GENERATION+1], [+DIRECT]
 < X Parent of Y and Male X >

The componential analysis of meaning reveals the similarities and differences between or among the words in a lexical field. It can be used to predict lexical relations, such as hyponymy/hypernymy, synonymy and antonymy.

The componential analysis of meaning is useful in the discussion of the lexical relation of **hyponymy**. Hyponymy is a relationship between two words, in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word (see section 3.3.1.).

For example, there is a relationship of hyponymy between the terms *mother* and *woman*. *Mother* is the hyponym of *woman*, as the meaning of *mother* is included in the meaning of *woman*. *Woman* is the superordinate term, a hypernym. This is proved by the fact that *mother* contains in its meaning postulate all the features of the word *woman*: [+ANIMATE], [+HUMAN], [+FEMALE], [+ADULT], to which the semantic components of kinship terms are added [+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE], [GENERATION+1], [+DIRECT] and the relational components < X Parent of Y >. In a similar way, *bachelor* and *spinster* are hyponyms of *man* and *woman* because they contain all the semantic features found in the meaning postulates of *man* and *woman*, while adding the specific seme [+NEVER MARRIED]. The same relationship holds between the terms: *stallion* and *horse*. The term *stallion* [ANIMAL] [EQUINE] [MALE] is a hyponym of *horse* [ANIMAL] [EQUINE].

The componential analysis can also be used to predict **synonymy** and **antonymy**, which can be defined in terms of the similarities and differences among the semantic components (see sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4.).

For instance, synonymy occurs when two words have senses with identical feature specifications: *girl* and *maid*: [+HUMAN], [+FEMALE], [+YOUNG]. Componential analysis may also establish degrees of synonymy. A pair of true synonyms will share the same set of semantic components, while near-synonyms will have some, but not all semantic components in common. For example, *barn* and *shed* would be near-synonyms. They share the components [BUILDING], [STORAGE], but *barn* has the additional component of [FARM], while *shed* has perhaps the additional component [HOUSE]. (cf. Jackson 1988: 91)

Antonymy occurs among minimally different pairs of senses, i.e. the senses have all the same feature specifications but one. So, the sense of *father* and the sense of *mother* are antonymous in that they have the same values for all features except for one, sex.

Further reading

For a brief account of the theory of the componential analysis of meaning, at its peak in the 1960s and early 1970s, and its revival in a more sophisticated approach in the 1990s, see Murphy (2003: 85–92). For advanced reading on classical and modern componential approaches, see Murphy (2010: ch. 3, ch. 4).

The componential analysis of other semantic fields can be found in Lyons (1977: 317–335); Leech (1981: 121f.); Brinton & Brinton (2010: 155–172).

For a detailed analysis of the characteristics and problems posed by componential analysis, see Cruse (2000: ch. 13).

Self-assessed test 3.5.2.

1. Provide the componential analysis of the meaning of the following kinship terms: *aunt, brother, mother-in-law, nephew*.
2. Give the componential analysis of the meaning of the term *grandmother*, including grammatical features, semantic components and relational components.
3. Propose possible semantic features to distinguish between the terms of the 'building' field: *school, shop, theatre, church, hospital, pub, courthouse, factory, bank, supermarket, cinema, city hall*.
4. Identify common and distinctive semantic components to give a componential analysis of the following lexemes, using only binary components: *horse, mare, stallion, foal, colt, filly*.
5. Make a componential analysis of the following lexemes using binary components: *dog, bitch, puppy, wolf, jackal, fox, vixen*.
6. Use semantic components to indicate that there is a relation of hyponymy between the following terms: *mare – horse; cub – lion; bookcase – furniture*.

3.6. Dictionary meaning

Dictionaries are commonly regarded as reference works in which we look up the meaning of words. Giving meanings is seen as the fundamental function of dictionaries and dictionary definitions are accounts of meaning, the attempt to express the meaning of each word distinctively.

3.6.1. Dictionary definition**Lexical meaning vs. dictionary meaning**

Lexical meaning, as shown in the previous sections, is the outcome of the referential relation between a lexeme and an entity in the world (denotation) and of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic sense relations among lexemes in a structured lexicon.

Lexical meaning is not to be confused with the meaning of a word given in a dictionary. Dictionaries simply describe the meanings of their entries by means of **paraphrases**. For example, the meaning of *bird* is described as:

bird ‘feathered animal with two wings and two legs, usually able to fly’
feathered ‘(of a bird) covered with feathers’
 (The new Oxford dictionary of English).

In order to understand the description, you have to know other words, like *feathered*. If you look these up in turn, you will find yet other words used for their description. Dictionary definitions are in this sense circular. No matter how carefully they are compiled, they will always contain an irreducible set of words, the meaning of which requires further explanation. Dictionary definitions are, then, forms of paraphrase, i.e. putting a word into other words.

By contrast, the lexical meanings we have in our mental lexicons are *not* just paraphrases, they are concepts. A dictionary definition is, therefore, not to be thought of as giving a complete characterisation or a complete semantic analysis of a lexeme. Dictionary definitions must be viewed as representing the potential meaning of a word, waiting for actualisation in a context.

Sense relations vs. dictionary entries

Homonymy and polysemy are essential in establishing dictionary entries. Homonyms have separate dictionary entries on account of their unrelated meanings. For instance, the words *ring* ‘circular band’ and *ring* ‘to make a bell sound’ are completely unconnected except by the coincidence of sharing a single form. Indeed, in Middle English these two words were not even pronounced the same. Such words are expected to occur in distinct dictionary entries. Polysemes, on the other hand, are entered as variant meanings (or senses) of the same headword. For instance, the lexeme *bed* is felt to be polysemous because there is some semantic linking between *river bed* and *hospital bed*. As a general rule, where a headword has more than one sense, the first sense given is the one most common in current usage.

However, the distinction between homonymy and polysemy is not always clear-cut; there are instances where it is not easy to decide whether a lexeme is homonymous or polysemantic. Usually the criterion for deciding between polysemy, or a single headword, and homonymy, or more than one headword, is etymology. If the meanings of a lexeme can be shown to be derived from a common origin, then this is treated as polysemy, even if resultant meanings diverge considerably (such as: *mouth* (of a river) and *mouth* (of an animal)), a polysemous lexeme that goes back to a single etymon. (see section 3.4.2.2.)

Besides defining meaning, dictionary entries also provide information about pronunciation, spelling, register, structures in which a lexeme occurs and usage.

Self-assessed test 3.6.1.

1. Look at the following excerpts from the entry of the lexeme *drone* in three online dictionaries. Comment on how the sense of ‘aircraft’ is rendered in each:

A drone is a type of aircraft that does not have a pilot and is controlled by someone on the ground: *Drones frequently pass over this region.*

(*COBUILD advanced English dictionary.*)

a pilotless radio-controlled aircraft

(*Collins English dictionary.*)

a pilotless airplane that is directed in flight by remote control

(*Webster’s New World College dictionary.*)

2. Compare the definitions of the lexeme *flute* given in *Merriam-Webster’s dictionary* online and in *Merriam-Webster learner’s dictionary*. Briefly comment on the choice of words (colloquial vs. technical), style (informal vs. formal).
3. Look up the words *spaniel* and *toga* in *The concise Oxford dictionary* and in *Webster’s new collegiate*. Note that there is a narrower sort of dictionary information or a broader sort of encyclopaedic information in characterising the meaning of a linguistic expression. Underline the elements that indicate a sort of encyclopaedic information, irrelevant for the understanding of the meaning of the lexeme.

3.6.2. Types of dictionaries

Dictionaries vary according to the number of languages dealt with, their perspective on language (diachronic or synchronic) and according to their intended users.

3.6.2.1. Monolingual dictionaries now exist for almost all languages and are of several distinct types, depending on the audience to which they are addressed.

a. **General purpose dictionaries** aim to help speakers understand the precise meanings, pronunciations, spellings, usages, and histories of the words of the English language, including some of the technical words. They are of four major types, namely the so-called:

- **unabridged dictionaries** (e.g. *Oxford English dictionary*)
- **desk dictionaries**, which are shortened forms of the full dictionaries, either for college use or for use at lower educational levels (e.g. *Collins English dictionary*, *Longman dictionary of the English language*, *The Oxford new desk dictionary and thesaurus*),
- **concise dictionaries** (e.g. *Concise Oxford dictionary*, *Longman concise English dictionary*)
- **pocket size dictionaries** (e.g. *Pocket Oxford dictionary*).

A general-purpose dictionary usually provides the following lexical facts for an entry:

- (phonological): the pronunciation of a word and variants;
- (morphological): a word's morpheme composition, and any irregular inflections;
- (syntactic): the word class and particular structures a word may enter;
- (semantic): the meanings of a word and the semantic structures it may enter;
- (context): restrictions on social context and style in which a word may be used;
- (spelling): the normal and any variant spellings of a word;
- (etymological): the origin and history of a word;
- (usage): frequency of use, when acquired, any taboos:

Here is the entry of the lexeme *child*, as an example:

child, noun, often attributive \ˈchɪ(-ə)ld\ plural **children** play \ˈchɪl-drən, -dərən\
1a: an unborn or recently born person **b dial**: a female infant **2a**: a young person especially between infancy and youth **b**: a childlike or childish person **c**: a person not yet of age **3** usually **childe** play \ˈchɪ(-ə)ld\
archaic: a youth of noble birth **4a**: a son or daughter of human parents **b**: DESCENDANT **5**: one strongly influenced by another or by a place or state of affairs **6**: PRODUCT, RESULT <*barbed wire ... is truly a child of the plains — W. P. Webb*> childless play \ˈchɪ(-ə)l(d)-ləs\ **adjective** childlessness **noun** with child: **PREGNANT noun w VERB**

(Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster)

Among monolingual dictionaries, there are **historical dictionaries** whose purpose is primarily etymological. The main historical dictionary for English is the multi-volume *Oxford English dictionary*, and its abbreviated two-volume version, the *Shorter Oxford english dictionary*. Both aim to trace back the history of words, and the developments in form and meaning of the words that have constituted the vocabulary of English since 1150 for the OED and since 1700 for the SOED. By contrast, there are also ‘synchronic’ historical dictionaries that take a view of the vocabulary at some point in time. Such a dictionary might chart the vocabulary of Old English (Roberts et al 2000) or of Middle English (e.g. Kurath & Kuhn 1952–2001).

b. **Learner’s dictionaries** are aimed at those learning English as a second or foreign language and differ deeply from those of native speakers (e.g. *Merriam-Webster’s learner’s dictionary*, *Cambridge learner’s dictionary*, *Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary*, *Macmillan English dictionary for advanced learners*). Their most striking feature is the use of a restricted and simplified core vocabulary for the definitions (no more than 4,000 words); they provide detailed guidance on grammar and usage, include example sentences and collocations that illustrate the various meanings of a word. To increase their usefulness, etymological and historical data are generally excluded:

child /'tʃaɪld/ noun plural children /'tʃɪldrən/ [count] **1:** a young person v the birth of a *child* She’s pregnant with their first *child*. Δ a play for both *children* and adults \square I went there once **as a child**. [=when I was a child]— often used before another noun. \square a *child* prodigy a *child* \square actor child development \square *child* psychologists; **2:** a son or daughter \square All their *children* are grown now. \square an elderly couple and their adult *children* **3:** an adult who acts like a child: \square a childlike or childish person \square I’m a *child* when it comes to doing taxes. [=I need to be told or shown what to do] \square Men are such *children* sometimes. **4:** a person who has been strongly influenced by a certain place or time or by the events happening during that time \square She’s a *child* of her time. \square a *child* of the **Depression children should be seen and not heard** — used to say that children should be quiet and well-behaved **with child** *old-fashioned:* PREGNANT \square She was **with child**. [=she discovered that she was pregnant] — see also BRAINCHILD

(*Merriam-Webster’s advanced learner’s English dictionary*, 2008)

Most language dictionaries are also accessible online or in CD or DVD formats (see *References*, section: *English Language Dictionaries*), which are essential for many kinds of searches. However, we recommend these not as a substitute but as a supplement to a print version, if only because printed pages permit a level of browsing that can’t yet be duplicated on computer screens.

c. **Specialised dictionaries** are aimed to clarify the technical jargon of various professional and scholarly areas (art, architecture, music, business, law, computing, psychology, mathematics, literature, sociology, philosophy, politics, mythology, religion, etc.). Examples are: *Dictionary of economics* (Pearce 1992); *Oxford dictionary of computing* (Illingworth 1996); *Dictionary of lexicography* (Hartmann & James 1998), etc. Such dictionaries define the terminology that is crucial for the subject; they exclude some lexical information (e.g. pronunciation, grammar, etymology).

There are also some specialised dictionaries of interest to general audience, such as **thesauri**. A ‘thesaurus’ is a book in which words and phrases are arranged according to their meaning, the object aimed at being “to find easily the word or the words by which that idea may be most fitly and aptly expressed” (cf. *Roget’s thesaurus* 1989: xiii). Thus, a thesaurus presents information about words in a very different way from a dictionary. A thesaurus takes all the lexical items that it contains and arranges them in a single comprehensive taxonomy. For instance, Roget’s taxonomy started with six primary classes: I. Abstract relations; II. Space; III. Matter; IV. Intellect; V. Volition; VI. Affections.

A word is entered as one among a small set of related words that may be closely synonymous, like *reap*, *mow*, *cut* – although not necessarily so; rather, they are **co-hyponyms**, or else **co-meronyms**, of some superordinate term. Thus, *reap*, *mow*, *cut* (*cut* in this special sense) are co-hyponyms of *cut* in its more general sense; and the items in the next sub-paragraph (*manure*, *dress the ground*, *prune*, *graft*) all represent stages in the cultivation process, that is, they are co-meronyms of *cultivate*. When we use a thesaurus to search for synonyms what we are really looking for are words that do not ordinarily ‘mean the same thing,’ but they occur within an overall semantic space. (cf. Halliday & Yallop 2007: 12)

The entry for *child* from *Merriam-Webster’s dictionary and thesaurus* (2006) is given below as an illustration:

child *noun* **1** *a young person who is between infancy and adulthood* <an imaginative animated film that appeals to adults as well as to children> **Synonyms** bairn [chiefly Scottish], bambino, bud, chap [Southern & Midland], chick, cub, juvenile, kid, kiddie (also kiddy), kiddo, moppet, sprat, sprout, squirt, whelp, youngling, youngster, youth **Related Words** adolescent, minor; kindergartner (also kindergartener), preschooler, rug rat [slang], schoolboy, schoolchild, schoolgirl, schoolkid; babe, baby, bantling, infant, neonate, nestling, newborn, toddler, tot, tyke (also tike), weanling; brat, devil, hellion, imp, jackanapes, mischief, monkey, rascal, rogue, urchin, whippersnapper; cherub; preteen, preteen-ager, subteen, teen, teenager, teener, teenybopper, tween; lad, nipper, shaver, stripling, tad; bobby-soxer, hoyden, tomboy **Near Antonyms**

middle-ager; ancient, elder, golden-ager, oldster, old-timer, senior, senior citizen
Antonyms adult, grown-up; **2** *a recently born person* <wrapped the child in a blanket before taking him outside in the cold>**Synonyms** babe, bambino, baby, infant, neonate, newborn **Related Words** cherub; foundling, nursling, suckling; premie (also premie); papoose; bantling, kid, kiddie (also kiddy), kiddo, moppet, toddler, tot, tyke (also tike); boy, nipper, tad; juvenile, minor, youngling, youngster, youth; brat, imp, squirt, urchin, whippersnapper; girl, hoyden, tomboy
Near Antonyms adult, grown-up; elder, graybeard, oldster, old-timer, senior, senior citizen; **3** *a condition or occurrence traceable to a cause* <widespread stress is the child of the frenetic pace of the modern world>**Synonyms** aftereffect, aftermath, backwash, effect, conclusion, consequence, corollary, development, fate, fruit, issue, outcome, outgrowth, precipitate, product, result, resultant, sequel, sequence, upshot **Related Words** ramification; denouement (also dénouement), echo, implication, repercussion; afterclap, afterglow, aftershock; blowback, by-product, fallout, offshoot, ripple, side effect (also side reaction), spin-off **Near Antonyms** consideration, determinant, factor; base, basis, foundation, ground, groundwork; impetus, incentive, inspiration, instigation, stimulus; mother, origin, root, source, spring **Antonyms** antecedent, causation, cause, occasion, reason.

Some specialist dictionaries focus on an aspect of lexical description: there are **dictionaries of pronunciation** (e.g. Jones 1997; Wells 2000), **dictionaries of spelling** (e.g. Manser 1998), **dictionaries of etymology** (e.g. Onions 1966) and **dictionaries of slang** (Chapman 2005; Ayto 2010; Simpson 2010), **dictionaries of euphemisms** (e.g. Holder 2008), **dictionaries of (modern) usage** (e.g. Garner 2003).

3.6.2.2. Bilingual and multilingual dictionaries

In contrast to monolingual dictionaries, which define words and phrases in a language, **bilingual dictionaries** give information about their equivalents in another language. In addition to the translation of lexemes, such books of reference usually indicate the part of speech, gender, verb type, declension model and other grammatical clues to help a non-native speaker use the word. Other features sometimes present in bilingual dictionaries are lists of phrases, usage and style guides, verb tables, maps and grammar references. Here is an entry from an English-Romanian dictionary:

child [tʃaɪld] **I. pl. children** [ˈtʃɪldrən] *s.* **1.** copil; băiat, fiu; fată, fiică; ~ **in arms** copil de țăță, sugar; ~ **of shame** copil din flori; ~ **of the forest** copil al pădurilor, indian (din America de Nord); **grown-up children** copii mari; **a naughty** ~ un copil neastâmpărat, rău; **a spoilt** ~ un copil răsfătat, răzgâiat; **a ~ unborn** (un) copil(aș) nevinovat, un om nevinovat ca un prunc; **to be with** ~ a fi gravidă, însărcinată; (*prov.*) **he that has no children knows not what is love** cine nu are copii nu știe ce înseamnă dragostea; (*fig.*) **to kiss the ~ for the nurse's sake** a fi fățarnic; (*prov.*) **when children stand quiet, they have done some harm** când

copiii sunt foarte cuminți, înseamnă că au făcut o poză; **to be a good** ~ a fi (un copil) cuminte; (*amer. glumeț, mai ales în vorbirea negrilor*) **this** ~ eu; copilul lui tata; **be a ~ of the time** fii copilul secolului tău, al vremii tale, trăiește în contemporaneitate; from/ (inv.) **of a** ~ din copilărie; (rar) **to be past a** ~ a nu mai fi copil; (*prov.*) **to throw out the ~ along with the bath** a arunca apa din baie cu copil cu tot; ca să omoare musca îi crapă (cuiva) capul cu ciocanul; (*prov.*) **a burnt ~ dreads the fire** cine s-a fript cu ciorba / supă, suflă și-n iaurt. 2. (*fig.*) copil, nevârstnic; **he is a mere** ~ e un copil, nu e decât un copil. 3. (*fig.*) rod, vlăstar; **fancy's ~rod** al fanteziei. II. *adj.* de copil / copii, copilăresc, infantil, al copiilor, al copilului. **child bearing** ['t'aɪld 'beərɪŋ] s. naștere, facere; **to be past** ~ a nu mai putea să aibă copii; a nu mai fi tânără. (*Dicționar englez-român* 2004)

As can be noticed, the dictionary entry of the lexeme *child* also includes collocations, idiomatic expressions and proverbs in English, with their semantic or lexical equivalents, when available, in Romanian.

Bilingual dictionaries can be unidirectional, meaning that they list the meanings of words of one language in another, or can be bidirectional, allowing translation to and from both languages. Bidirectional bilingual dictionaries usually consist of two sections, each listing words and phrases of one language alphabetically along with their translation (e.g. *Oxford-Duden German dictionary: German-English/English-German* 1999).

In **multilingual dictionaries** a word or phrase in one language is presented with the translation in several languages. Multilingual dictionaries can be arranged alphabetically or words can be grouped by topic.

In recent decades, the construction of dictionaries has been seen in terms of two complementary structures: the macrostructure (or the inventory of words included in a dictionary) and the microstructure of individual entries. Both structures have been steadily upgraded and enlarged for the needs of different kinds of users. The macrostructure adopted in most dictionaries is the alphabetical one that provides easy access to individual items. The dictionaries published show huge interest in general and specialised vocabulary for various professions, in providing purely lexical information and adding encyclopaedic information about the items listed.

Further reading

Introductory reading on dictionary definitions and types of dictionaries in Jackson (2013: ch. 3, 9, 11, 12); Lieber (2010: ch.2) – among others.

A good overview is Landau's (2001) *Dictionaries: the art and craft of lexicography*. Also recommended is Béjoint's (2000) *Modern lexicography: an introduction*, which discusses the aims of dictionaries, their functions in society, and the reference needs of their users.

On practical lexicography, see Jackson (2002); Sterkenburg (2003); Atkins & Rundell (2008).

More advanced reading on the construction of dictionaries and thesauruses, in Peters (2016: 187–204).

Self-assessed test 3.6.2.

1. Find four different dictionaries of English. Read the prefaces and other front matter to these dictionaries, as well as the blurb on their dust jackets, to gain an idea of how dictionaries are presenting themselves to their potential users. Then fill in the following table:

Title				
mono-/bilingual				
general/ specialised				
synchronic/ diachronic				
user group				
size (pages)				
number of headwords				

2. Look up the words *student*, *university*, *to join*, *to graduate* in four dictionaries and comment upon the differences in the linguistic description given in each entry. Organize the information you get in table-format, as below:

	<i>Longman Concise English Dictionary</i>	<i>Cambridge Learner's Dictionary</i>	<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i>	<i>Collins English Dictionary</i>
spelling				
pronunciation				
inflectional irregularities				
syntactic structures				
meaning (s)				
context (examples)				
etymology				
usage				

Summary

The perspectives on word meaning that we have explored in this chapter include the referential relation between a lexeme and an entity in the world (denotation), and sense relations between lexemes within the lexicon.

We have seen that to know the sense of a word is to know what its sense relations are with other lexemes or more complex expressions (idioms), whether these relations are syntagmatic (collocations, idioms) or paradigmatic (based on synonymy, antonymy or hyponymy).

The study of sense relations has shown that the lexicon is a structured word-store of the language. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic sense relations are applicable to the field of lexicography and corpora research, namely, they help with the compilation of dictionaries and thesauri and with the development of large scale databases of words for use in various applications beyond the confines of linguistic interests.

We have also explored word meaning from the viewpoint of the componential analysis, which is applied essentially to referential meaning, though it also has some relevance in defining the sense relations of synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy.

Finally, we have touched upon the topic of the dictionary meaning of lexemes, in an endeavour to help undergraduates become familiar with the basic layout of a dictionary entry and aware of the wide range of dictionaries, printed or online, available for study and research.

Answers to self-assessed tests

1.1. Affixation

Answers 1.1.

1.

<i>teachers</i>	TEACH (fm)+ -ER (bm)+ 'PLURAL' (bm)
<i>played</i>	PLAY (fm) + 'PAST TENSE' (bm)
<i>books</i>	BOOK (fm) + 'PLURAL' (bm)
<i>boy's</i>	BOY (fm)+ 'POSSESSIVE'(bm)
<i>painful</i>	PAIN (fm) + -FUL bm)
<i>unhappiness</i>	UN- (bm) + HAPPY (fm) + -NESS (bm)

Answers 1.1.1.

1.

toys: -s inflection indicating the plural
listened: -ed inflection indicating past tense
reassessment: re- prefix, -ment suffix
girls': -s' inflection indicating genitive case
fatherly: -ly suffix
uncover: un- prefix
singing: -ing inflection marking active participles
disarms: dis- prefix, -s inflection marking the plural
sorrowful: -ful suffix
oxen: -en inflection marking the plural (*ox-oxen*)
alumni: -i inflection marking the plural (*alumnus-alumni*)
finest: -est inflection marking the superlative degree

2.

- sing, singing, sang, sung* – word forms of the lexeme *sing*;
singer – different lexeme.
- woman, woman's, women* - word forms of the lexeme *woman*;
womanly – different lexeme.
- perform, performs, performing* – word forms of the lexeme *perform*;
performer, performance – different lexemes.
- written, wrote, writing* – word forms of the lexeme *write*;
writer, rewrites – different lexemes.

3.

birds N. bird (free morpheme) + 'PLURAL'

<i>repayment</i>	N. re- (bm) + pay (fm) + -ment (bm)
<i>speaks</i>	V. speak (fm) + 'PRESENT TENSE'
<i>speakers</i>	N. speak (fm) + -er (bm) + 'PLURAL'
<i>undecidedly</i>	Adv. un-(bm) + decide (fm) + -ed (bm) + -ly (bm)

Answers 1.1.2.2.

1.

alcohol > alcoholic	N > A governing
arrive > arrival	V > N governing
picture > picturesque	N > A governing
wife > ex-wife	N > N restrictive
clear > clearance	V > N governing
like > dislike	V > V restrictive
virtue > virtuous	N > A governing
translate > translation	V > N governing
do > undo	V > V restrictive
moral > moralise	A > V governing
develop > development	V > N governing
moral > amoral	A > A restrictive
governing affixes: <i>-ic, -al, -esque, -ance, -ous, -tion, -ize, -ment,</i>	
restrictive derivational affixes: <i>ex-, dis-, un-, a-</i>	

2.

Latin or French: *-able, -ity, -ive, re-*.

Germanic: *-ful, -less, -ly, -ness, -th, un-*.

3.

<i>wickedness</i> : Gmc. root + Gmc. Suffix
<i>restlessness</i> : Gmc. root + Gmc. suffix + Gmc. suffix
<i>unhappiness</i> : Gmc. prefix + Gmc. root + Gmc. suffix
<i>uneasiness</i> : Gmc. prefix + Old French root + Gmc. suffix = hybrid
<i>uncomfortable</i> : Gmc. prefix + Old French root + Latin suffix = hybrid
<i>unwelcoming</i> : Gmc. prefix + Gmc. root + Latin suffix = hybrid
<i>unselfish</i> : Gmc. prefix + Gmc. root + Gmc. suffix
<i>unconquerable</i> : Gmc. prefix + Latin root + Latin suffix = hybrid
<i>immoderately</i> : Latin prefix + Latin root + Gmc. suffix = hybrid

4.

a. *Christianity*: *-ian* + *-ity*; *recreational*: *-tion* + *-al*; *negativity*: *-ive* + *-ity*

b. *usefulness*: *-ful* + *-ness*; *carelessness*: *-less* + *-ness*; *foolishness*: *-ish* + *-ness*; *friendliness*: *-ly* + *-ness*

c. *sequentialness*: *-al* + *-ness*; *responsiveness*: *-ive* + *-ness*

Answers 1.1.2.3 – 6.

1.

1. denominal abstract-noun-forming suffixes, b)
2. denominal adjective-forming suffixes, d)
3. deverbal adjective-forming suffixes, c)
4. denominal verb-forming suffixes, a)
5. deadjectival verb-forming suffixes, e)

2.

Noun + *-able*: *peaceable, actionable, companionable, saleable, marriageable, reasonable, impressionable, fashionable, serviceable, knowledgeable,*

Verb + *-able*: *fixable, breakable, readable, provable, perishable*

3.

Noun + <i>-ly</i> > Adjective/ Adverb	<i>manly, friendly, weekly</i>
Noun + <i>-ly</i> > Adjective	<i>stately, womanly, ghostly</i>
Adjective + <i>-ly</i> > Adjective/ Adverb	<i>northerly, deadly</i>
Adjective + <i>-ly</i> > Adjective	<i>goodly,</i>
Adjective + <i>-ly</i> > Adverb	<i>simply, definitely</i>

5.

Agent: *baker, writer, hearer, explorer, designer, farmer, swimmer,*
 Patient (inhabitant): *northerner, villager; insider, outsider, Londoner, New Yorker*

Instrument: *atomizer, blotter, mower, printer, sleeper, air-freshener, lemon-squeezer, feeler*

Experiencer: *admirer, lover, amuser, scorer*

Action: *waiver, disclaimer*

Locative: *diner, sleeper*

6.

dictation, dictator, dictatorial, contradiction, contradictory, contradictoriness, benediction

8.

human (root/stem) + *-itarian* (affix) = *humanitarian*
humanitarian (stem) + *-ism* (affix) = *humanitarianism*
music (root/stem) + *-al* (affix) = *musical*
musical (stem) + *-ly* (affix) = *musically*
enchant (root/stem) + *-ment* (affix) = *enchantment*
like (root/stem) + *-ly* (affix) = *likely*
likely (stem) + *-hood* (affix) = *likelihood*
vaccine (root/stem) + *-ation* (affix) = *vaccination*
re- (affix) + *vaccination* (stem) = *revaccination*

- 9.
1. to avoid identical vowels, a.
 2. to separate one prefix from another, c.
 3. to disambiguate words with the same spelling (homographs), d.
 4. to show coordination of prefixes, e.
 5. to avoid sequences of different vowels, b.

11.

institutionalization

[institut]_V
 [[institut]_V-ion]_N
 [[[institut]_V-ion]_N-al]_A
 [[[[institut]_V-ion]_N-al]_A-iz]_V
 [[[[[institut]_V-ion]_N-al]_A-is]_V-ation]_N

redecorating

[decor]_N
 [[decor]_N-at]_V
 [re-[[decor]_N-at]_V]_V
 [[re-[[decor]_N-at]_V]_V-ing]_V

carelessly

[care]_N
 [[care]_N-less]_A
 [[[care]_N-less]_A-ly]_{Adv}

disapproval [[dis-[approv]_V]_V-al]_{Adj}

fictionalization [[[[fiction]_N-al]_A-ise]_V-tion]_N

1.2. Compounding

Answers 1.2.2. –1.2.3.

1.

synthetic compounds: *dog walker*, *hand washing*, *home-made* (verbal head).

root compounds: *windmill*, *ice cold*, *hard hat*, *red hot* (non-verbal head).

2.

endocentric: one element functions as the semantic head of the compound which is modified by a non-head element.

bookseller (*book*_N + *seller*_N) is a kind of *seller*;

bird watch (*bird*_N + *watch*_N) is a kind of *watching*.

exocentric compounds:

blockhead (*block*_N + *head*_N). A *blockhead* is neither a kind of *block* nor a kind of *head* but rather ‘an idiot’;

turncoat (*turn*_V + *coat*_N). A *turncoat* is not a kind of *coat* but ‘a traitor’;

spoil-sport (*spoil*_V + *sport*_N). A *spoil-sport* is not a kind of *sport* but ‘a grumpy person.’

3.

right-headed compound: *wind screen*, *sales receipt*, *hard working*,
gamekeeper, *daydreamer*.

left-headed compound: *attorney general*, *mother-in-law*, *notary public* (less frequent)

4.

attributive: *wrist-watch*, *book-self*, *light-house*, *blue blood*

coordinative: *secretary stenographer*, *scientist-explorer*

subordinative: *house-hunting*, *horse-riding*, *lawn-mower*,
shop-clearance

Answers 1.2.4.

1.

radiation safety

radiation safety training

radiation safety training manual

2.

Ideal Home [Exhibition] ‘exhibition of ideal homes’

ideal [Home Exhibition] ‘ideal exhibition of homes’

student film [society] ‘society for student films’

student [film society] ‘film society for students’

a long term [contract] ‘a contract concluded for a long term’

a long [term contract] ‘a contract of many pages which ends on a set date’

Old English [student] ‘a student who studies Old English’

old [English student] ‘an English student who is old’

police dog [trainer] ‘trainer who trains police dogs’

police [dog trainer] ‘a dog trainer who works with the police’

kitchen towel [rack] ‘a rack for kitchen towels’

kitchen [towel rack] ‘a towel rack in the kitchen’

3.

a) solid: *background*, *Highlander*, *lipstick* (short, native/older words)

b) spaced: *the armed forces*, *dress circle* (longer, recent combinations)

c) hyphenated: *class-consciousness*, *first-offender*, *light-minded* (affixes)

4.

spelling: a) as single words; b) as sequences of words;
 pronunciation: a) with the main stress on the first component; b) the stress on the second.

Answers 1.2.5.

1.

V + V (b); P + V (c); Adv + V (e); A + V (d); N + V (a).

2.

N + N + -er: week-ender, treasure-seekers

A + N + -er: left-hander, Highlander

V + V + -er: go-getter

Adv + V + -er: new-comer, late-comer

N + V + -er: theatre-goer, stocking weavers

Num + N + -er: first-nighter, first-offender

Adj + N + -ed: broad-shouldered, light-minded, warm-hearted

N + N + -ed: doll-faced, fur-lined

Num + N + -ed: two sided, three-cornered

Answers 1.2.6.

1.

cyberart, cybercash, cybercitizen, cybercommerce, cybercrime,
 cyberdemocracy, cyberian, cyberlawyer, cyberpunk, cyberphobia,
 cybershopping, cyberspace, cybersquatting, cybersurfer,
 cyberterrorism, cyberwar.

2.

nano- 'one thousand millionth (or billionth) of'; also in *nanosecond*

poly- 'many'; also in *polylexemic*

-phony 'sound'; also in *telephony*

omni- 'all'; also in *omniscient*

-vorous 'eating'; also in *carnivorous*

3.

[Greek *oikos*, house]

'the natural environment': *ecotourism*, *ecosystem*, *ecology*

[Via Latin from Greek *nanos*, dwarf.]

in units of measurement, a factor of 10^{-9} : *nanotechnology*,
nanocomputer

[Greek *patheia*, suffering, feeling.]

'disease or disorder; treatment of disease': *cardiopathy*,
psychopathy, *homeopathy*

[Greek *phobia*, fear or horror]

‘extreme or irrational fear or dislike’: *acrophobia*, *agoraphobia*, *photophobia*.

4.

biblio (book) + *graphy* (writing) = *bibliography*

xeno (foreigner) + *phobia* (fear) = *xenophobia*

pseudo (false, not real) + *onym* (name) = *pseudonym*

anti (opposite, against) + *pathy* (experience, feeling) = *antipathy*

antropo (human being) + *ology* (science, theory) = *anthropology*

5.

a) *dermatology*: *-derm(at)-* ‘skin,’ *-(o)logy* ‘science, area of expertise’

b) *pterodactyl*: *-pter(o)-* ‘wing,’ *-dactyl-* ‘finger’

c) *oligarchy*: *olig(o)-* ‘few,’ *-archy* ‘rule’

1.3. Clipping

Answers 1.3.

1.

info < information (back-clipping)

disco < discotheque (back-clipping)

van < caravan (fore-clipping)

limo < limousine (back-clipping)

stereo < stereophonic (back-clipping)

specs < spectacles (medial-clipping)

2.

E.F.L. < English as A Foreign Language

E.S.L. < English as A Second Language

K.O. < knockout

R.P. < Received Pronunciation, the standard form of British pronunciation

ZIP (code) < Zone Improvement Program, a system in the U.S. to facilitate the delivery of mail, consisting of a code printed after the address;

NASA < National Aeronautics and Space Administration

CIA < Central Intelligence Agency

ESSE < European Society for the Study of English

FBI < Federal Bureau of Investigation

FAQ < frequently asked questions

WYSWYG < What You See Is What You Get

atv < all-terrain vehicle;

yuppie < young urban professional; woopie < well-off older person

1.4. Conversion

Answers 1.4.

1.

base word: *to major, e-mail, to clash, to clean*

converted word: *major, to e-mail, clash, clean*

2.

Noun to verb conversion: *text, bike, interface*

Verb to noun conversion: *run, chat*

Adjective to verb conversion: *calm*

Adjective to noun conversion: *local, royal, comic*

1.5. Phonological change

Answers 1.5.

1.

N

`import

`present

V

im`port (differentiated by stress)

pre`sent (differentiated by stress and vowel quality)

1.6. Blending

Answers 1.6.

1.

cheeseburger < cheese + hamburger

snowmobile < snow + automobile

milkaholic < milk + alcoholic

toytoon < toy + cartoon

2.

biogas < biological + gas

e-commerce < electronic + commerce

e-security < electronic + security

eco-friendly < ecological + friendly

medicare < medical + care

3.

baby + kidnap > babynap

bold + audacious > boldacious

slang + language > slanguage

tank + bulldozer > tank-dozer

4.

airport + bus > airbus
 electronic + cash > e-cash
 flexible + time > flexi-time
 helicopter + skiing > helskiing

5.

fantastic + fabulous > fantabulous
 European + bureaucrat > Eurocrat
 multiple + university > multiversity
 smoke + haze > smaze
 television + broadcast > telecast
 transmitter + receiver > transceiver

1.7. Back-derivation

Answers 1.7.

to automate	<	automation	(verb from noun)
greed	<	greedy	(noun from adjective)
to housekeep	<	housekeeper	(verb from noun)
to sleepwalk	<	sleep-walking	(verb from noun)
to televise	<	television	(verb from noun)

1.8. Eponymy

Answers 1.8.

Suffixation in: *-ium* (*einsteinium*, *rutherfordium*), *-ine* (*Benedictine*, *Ursuline*), *-ism* (*daltonism*, *masochism*, *sadism*), *-esque* (*Robinsonesque*, *Kafkaesque*), *-ist* (*Blairist*, *Rappist*), *-ite* (*Clintonite*, *hussite*); *-ia* (*fuchsia*).

1.10. Reduplication

Answer 1.10

1.

reduplicative compounds proper: *night-night*
 ablaut combinations: *sing-song*, *fiddle-faddle*, *tip-top*
 rhyme combinations: 'Fiddle-de-dee,' *crunchings* and *munchings*,
boogie-woogie, *the nitty-gritty*, *honeybunny*, *hugger-mugger*, *pitter-pattered*

2.

Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverb
bric-a-brac, <i>n.</i>	humdrum, <i>adj.</i>	dilly-dally, <i>v</i>	higgledy-piggledy, <i>adv.</i>
chitchat, <i>n.</i>	teeny-weeny, <i>adj.</i>	shilly-shally, <i>v</i>	willy-nilly, <i>adv.</i>
claptrap, <i>n.</i>	teeny-weeny, <i>adj.</i>	wiggle-waggle, <i>v</i>	

mish-mash, *n.* wishy-washy, *adj.* pitter-patter, *adj./v.*

din-din, *n.*

hugger-mugger, *n.*

hurly-burly, *n.*

knick-knack, *n.*

suffixation in *-y*, occasionally in *-er*

Reduplicative Compound	Meaning
bric-a-brac, <i>n.</i>	ornaments and other small decorative objects of little value
chitchat, <i>n.</i>	conversation about things that are not important.
claptrap, <i>n.</i>	stupid talk that has no value
dilly-dally, <i>v.</i>	to take too long to do something, go somewhere or make a decision.
din-din, <i>n.</i>	dinner
higgledy-piggledy, <i>adv.</i>	in an untidy way that lacks any order
hugger-mugger, <i>n.</i>	1) secrecy; 2) confusion
humdrum, <i>adj.</i>	boring and always the same
hurly-burly, <i>n.</i>	a very noisy and busy activity or situation
knick-knack, <i>n.</i>	a small decorative object in a house.
mish-mash, <i>n.</i>	confused mixture of different kinds of things, styles, etc.
pitter-patter, <i>n./v.</i>	1) A rapid series of light tapping sound; 2) make or move with a series of light tapping sounds.
teeny-weeny, <i>adj.</i>	very small, or connected with teenagers
wiggle-waggle, <i>v.</i>	to make something move from one side to another or up and down
willy-nilly, <i>adv.</i>	1) whether one wants to or not; 2) in a careless way without planning
wishy-washy, <i>adj.</i>	1) not having clear or firm ideas or beliefs, 2) not bright in colour.

2.1. The native stock of words

Answers 2.1.

1.

the = definite article, late Old English *þe*

king = a late Old English contraction of *cyning* 'king, ruler' (also used as a

title). This word is of uncertain origin. It is possibly related to Old English *cynn* ‘family, race,’ making a *king* originally a ‘leader of the people. Or perhaps it is from a related prehistoric Germanic word meaning ‘noble birth,’ making *king* etymologically ‘one who descended from noble birth.’

of = OE *of*, unstressed form of *æf* (prep., adv.) ‘away, away from.’

The primary sense in Old English shifted in Middle English with the use of the word *of* to translate Latin *de* and especially Old French *de*, which had come to be the substitute for the genitive case.

England = Old English *Engla land*, literally ‘the land of the Angles’

write = Old English *writan* ‘to score, outline, draw the figure of,’ later ‘to set down in writing.’

poem = 1540s (replacing *poesy* in this sense), from Middle French *poème* (14c.), from Latin *poema* ‘composition in verse, poetry,’ from Greek *poema* ‘fiction, poetical work.’

2.

a. narrowing; b. widening; c. narrowing; d. degeneration; e. amelioration.

3.

Silly meant ‘deserving of pity’ in the fifteenth century, ‘ignorant’ in the sixteenth century and then developed to mean ‘foolish,’ as it does today.

4.

happy:

first attested around 1150–1200;

Middle English < Old Norse *happ* luck, chance; akin to Old English *gehæp* fit, convenient;

easy:

first attested around 1150–1200;

Middle English *aisie*, *esy* < AngloFrench (*a*) *eisie*, Old French *chaisié*, *aised*, past participle of *aisier* ‘to ease.’

comfortable:

1350–1400; Middle English < Anglo-French *confortable*.

able:

1275–1325; Middle English < Middle French < Latin *habilis* handy, equivalent to *hab* (*ēre*) to have, hold + *-ilis* -ile

rest:

before 900; (noun) Middle English, Old English; akin to German *Rast*

(v.) Middle English *resten*, Old English *restan*; akin to German *Rasten*

conquer:

1200–1250;

Middle English *conqueren* < AngloFrench *conquerir*, Old French *conquerre* < Vulgar Latin **conquēre* to acquire (for Lat. *conquīre* to seek out)

moderate:

1350–1400; Middle English *moderate* (adj.), *moderaten* (v.) < Latin *moderātus*

2.2. The borrowed stock of words

Answers 2.2.

1.

- a. chew (native) / masticate (borrowed)
- b. vend (borrowed) / sell (native)
- c. eat (native) / consume (borrowed)
- d. malady (borrowed) / sickness (native)
- e. emancipate (borrowed) / free (native)
- f. deadly (native) / mortal (borrowed)
- g. old (native) / antique (borrowed)
- h. sad (native) / dejected (borrowed)
- a. tell (native) / inform (borrowed)

2.

- a) *fragile* borrowed from Latin; *frail* borrowed from French
- b) *dual* borrowed from Latin; *two* inherited
- c) *nose* inherited; *nasal* borrowed from Latin
- d) *legal* borrowed from Latin; *loyal* borrowed from French

4.

French:

high culture: *ballet*, *cabernet*, *champagne*, *chic*, *cognac*

war / military: *bastion*, *brigade*, *battalion*, *cavalry*, *grenade*, *infantry*

Spanish:

war: *armada*, *barricade*, *canyon*, *embargo*,

animals: *alligator*, *coyote*, *mosquito*, *mustang*

Italian:

architecture: *alto*, *casino*, *cupola*, *fresco*

music: *duo*, *fugue*, *madrigal*, *piano*, *prima donna*, *soprano*, *opera*,
studio, *violin*

literature: *gazette* (via French), *motto*, *piano*, *stanza*

food: *broccoli*, *macaroni*, *cappuccino*, *espresso*, *pasta*, *pizza*, *ravioli*,
spaghetti, *spumante*, *zucchini*

2.3. Neologisms

Answers 2.3.

1.

a. blending with clipped first element:

smist, triathlete, robomb, internet, paratroops

b. blending with clipped second element:

bookvertising, aerobat, boatel, travelogue, computeracy

c. clipped first element + clipped second element:

amtrac, avionics, cyborg, Eurovision, pictiography

smist < *sm(oke)* + *mist*

triathlete < *triathl(on)* + *athlete*

robomb < *rob(ot)* + *bomb*

internet < *inter(national)* + *net*

paratroops < *para(chute)* + *troops*

bookvertising < *book* + *(ad)vertising*

aerobat < *aero* + *(ac)robat*

boatel < *boat* + *(ho)tel*

travelogue < *travel* + *(catal)ogue*

computeracy < *computer* + *(liter)acy*

amtrac < *am(phibi)us* + *trac(tor)*

avionics < *avi(ation)* + *(electr)onics*

cyborg < *cyb(ernet)ic* + *org(anism)*

Eurovision < *Euro(pean)* + *(tele)vision*

pictiography < *pic(ture)* + *dic(tionary)*

3.

to wikipedia, to flash mob, to spam = verbs converted from nouns

vlogging, blogging = derivation by the suffix -ing

white food = compounding

carbs = clipping

3. Word meaning

3.1. Connotation and denotation

Answers 3.1.

2.

candle – religious or romantic connotations

flower – emotional connotation of fragility

bird – connotes light-hearted mood, freedom
faraway – romantic connotations absent from the *distant*, its
denotationally synonymous pair.
milk – health and strength connotations
pig – connotes uncleanness and unpleasant smells
tram – connotations of nostalgia or holidays
chariot – emotional connotations of imposing dignity

3.

home (neutral), *residence* (familiar), *domicile* (formal, legal),
abode (poetic, archaic).

3.2.1. Collocations

Answers 3.2.1.

1.

to lay: to lay an egg, lay the blame, to lay before someone, to lay claim to
something, to lay open to something, lay to rest,

great is used in collocations with nouns expressing feelings and qualities:

great admiration	in great detail
great anger	great power
great enjoyment	great pride
great excitement	great sensitivity
great fun	great skill
great happiness	great strength
great joy	great understanding
	great wisdom
	great wealth

large is often used in collocations involving numbers and measurements:

large amount	large collection
large number of	large population
large proportion	large quantity
large scale	

2.

to enjoy

collocating	BNC	COCA
adjectives	<i>best, fine, pleasant</i>	<i>beautiful, best, delicious, full, free,</i>
nouns	<i>scenery</i>	<i>dinner, music, ocean, ride, savings, views, year</i>

6.

frightened:

Verbal collocates: be, feel, look, seem, sound | become, get | remain

Adverbial collocates: badly, desperately, extremely, genuinely, really, terribly, very | thoroughly | almost, a bit, a little, pretty, quite, rather | suddenly | physically

sad:

Verbal collocates: appear, be, feel, look, seem, sound | become, grow | make sb., find sb.

Adverbial collocates: all, desperately, immensely, extremely, particularly, profoundly, really, unbearably, very | almost | a bit, a little, quite, rather, slightly, somewhat, strangely | deeply, extremely, intensely, terribly, unutterably, very

worried:

Verbal collocates: be, feel, look, seem | get

Adverbial collocates: deeply, desperately, dreadfully, extremely, frantically, genuinely, particularly, really, seriously, terribly, very | increasingly | a bit, quite, rather, slightly | rightly

3.2.2. Idioms

Answers 3.2.2.

1.

b) phraseological units

best man ‘the male attendant of the bridegroom at a wedding’

burn one’s fingers ‘to suffer an unpleasant result of an action, especially loss of money’

keep one’s head above water ‘to manage to survive, especially financially’

show somebody the door ‘to make it clear that someone must leave’

to cry over spilt milk ‘to be upset over sth. that cannot be fixed, often sth. minor’

the last straw ‘the last in a series of unpleasant events which finally makes you feel that you cannot continue to accept a bad situation’

2.

Idiom	transformations	analysis
They buried the hatchet.	It seems [that the hatchet was buried].	passivisation
	The hatchet seems [not to have been buried yet by those journalists].	passivisation + raising
Sam ate his heart out over Jane.	Sam ate his heart out over Jane on Wednesday, then he ate it out over Ann on Thursday.	pronominalisation
	Sam ate his heart out over Jane, and Dan ate HIS out over Ann.	ellipsis in NP
Bob cried his eyes out.	Bob cried his eyes out on Tuesday, and Dan cried HIS out on Sunday.	ellipsis in NP
His words had touched a nerve.	The mere mention of John had touched a very raw nerve indeed.	adjectival modification
He won't pull the strings for you.	Those strings, he won't pull for you.	topicalisation
They planned to cook his goose.	My goose is cooked, but yours isn't.	passivisation + ellipsis in NP

5.

rhyming words: *hustle and bustle*alliterative: *part and parcel, rules and regulations*joined by *and*: *odds and ends, far and wide*joined by *or*: *make or break*joined by other words: *step by step*the same word: *through and through*opposites: *heads or tails***3.3.1. Hyponymy****Answers 3.3.1.**

1.

a. meal; b. building; c. bird; d. move; e. glass; f. joint; g. horse; h. linen; i. tooth; j. dog; k. china.

2.

footwear > slippers, tennis-shoes, boots, high-heel, etc.

stationary > pen, stapler, notebook, etc.

drinking vessel > mug, cup, glass, etc.

vehicle > motorbike, train, plane, etc.
 furniture > chair, cupboard, bookcase, desk, etc.
 poultry > hen, cock, goose, duck, etc.

3.

entity superordinate of *person*
person hyponym of *entity*, superordinate of *student*
student hyponym of *person*, superordinate of *freshman*
freshman hyponym of *student*
 hyponym hierarchy
 a) entity > person > student > freshman
 b) thing > product > tool > kitchen utensil > fridge
 c) thing > product > vehicle > car
 d) entity > thing > product > tool > garden tool > bucket

4.

	superordinate	basic	subordinate
a) apple, fruit, Granny Smith	fruit	apple	Granny Smith
b) garment, trousers, jeans	garment	trousers	jeans
mom	furniture	chair	wheelchair
d) bread-knife, cutlery, knife	cutlery	knife	bread-knife
e) crockery, saucer, plate	crockery	plate	saucer

3.3.2. Meronymy

Answers 3.3.2.

2.

1 Component-Integral Object

Wheels are parts of cars. Chapters are parts of books.
Belgium is part of NATO. Phonology is part of linguistics.

2 Member-Collection

A juror is part of a jury. This ship is part of a fleet.
An officer is member of an army.

3 Portion-Mass

This slice is part of a loaf of bread. A yard is part of a mile.

4 Stuff-Object

A martini is partly alcohol. The bike is partly steel.
Water is partly hydrogen.

5 Feature-Activity

Bidding is part of playing bridge.
Running is part of playing football.

6 Place-Area

The baseline is part of a tennis court. The fence is part of a garden.

3.3.3. Synonymy**Answers 3.3.3.1**

3.

unhappy

Synonymic series of adjectives: *infelicitous, lovesick, discontent, sad, discontented, wretched, miserable, suffering, sorrowful, joyless, dejected, cheerless, uncheerful, depressing, dysphoric, distressed, unpleasant*

Antonyms: *happy*,

Synonymic nouns: *felicity, happiness*

Answers 3.3.3.2.

1.

Prototypes: a) *beautiful*, b) *to ask*, c) *fear*, d) *courage*, e) *powerful*,
f) *feeling*, g) *place*, h) *fair*, i) *to follow*.

Reasons: it is the general word, it is neutral both stylistically and emotionally and it can stand for each of its synonyms in most uses.

3.

1	2	3	4
lack absence privation want defect	<u>ghost</u> spirit apparition phantom phantasm	affair business <u>concern</u> thing	scandal slander back-biting detraction <u>calumny</u>

Group 2: The prototype is *ghost*. The common feature of the terms of the synonymic series is ‘a supernatural disembodied being, imagined as appearing in visual form or haunting the living.’

Group 3: The prototype is *concern*. The feature shared by the terms of the synonymic series is ‘something to be dealt with.’

Group 4: The prototype is *calumny*. The feature shared by the synonymic series is ‘making of false statements that damage another’s reputation.’

4.

calmness, placidity, placidness, tranquillity, quietness, coolness,
imperturbability, imperturbableness

scholarly, academic, bookish, donnish, pedantic, erudite, learned, studious

loyal, true-blue, leal, hardcore, allegiant, doglike, liege
allow, admit, permit, tolerate, let, grant, appropriate
clearly, distinctly, intelligibly, understandably

Answers 3.3.3.3.

3.

phrasal verbs / single word verbs: *put up with* / *tolerate*; *put on* / *wear*.

idioms / verbs: *gain the upper hand* / *win*; *be in two minds* / *hesitate*.

similes: *to be as black as coal* / *to be as black as midnight*.

4.

prototypes: *to smell*, *to forbid*, *adult*, *clear*, *clothes*

super-ordinates: *silver*, *cutlery*

Answers 3.3.3.4.

1.

BrEnglish	AmEnglish	BrEnglish	AmEnglish
<i>aubergine</i>	<i>eggplant</i>	<i>parcel</i>	<i>package</i>
<i>draughts</i>	<i>draft</i>	<i>porridge</i>	<i>oatmeal</i>
<i>rubber</i>	<i>eraser</i>	<i>post</i>	<i>mail</i>
<i>fortnight</i>	<i>two weeks</i>	<i>roundabout</i>	<i>traffic circle</i>
<i>full stop</i>	<i>period</i>	<i>queue</i>	<i>line</i>
<i>interval</i>	<i>intermission</i>	<i>tin</i>	<i>can</i>
<i>ladybird</i>	<i>ladybug</i>	<i>waistcoat</i>	<i>vest</i>

2.

BrEnglish	AmEnglish	BrEnglish	AmEnglish
<i>ground floor</i>	<i>first floor</i>	<i>jug</i>	<i>pitcher</i>
<i>chips</i>	<i>French fries</i>	<i>pavement</i>	<i>sidewalk</i>
<i>rubbish</i>	<i>garbage</i>	<i>plimsoll</i>	<i>sneaker</i>
<i>gear lever</i>	<i>gear shift</i>	<i>dustbin</i>	<i>trashcan</i> .

3.

synonyms in terms of

origin: *end* (Gmc.) / *finish* (Fr.) / *conclude* (L.)

dialect/ varieties of English:

afternoon (BrE, AmE) / *arvo* (AusE, NzE);

Foreign Minister (BrE) / *Secretary of State* (AmE);

slang: *police officer* / *copper*;

jargon: *sacking* / *destuffing*

euphemism: *illiterate* / *uneducated*; *drunk* / *intoxicated* (formal, euph.) /

tipsy (coll.) / *fried* (slang);

4.

FORMAL ——— NEUTRAL ——— INFORMAL

parsimonious ungenerous mean stingy tight-arsed

5.

native (OE) – Latin

guts / *determination*

climb / *ascend*

native (OE) – French

sweat / *perspire*

pluck / *courage*

clothes / *attire*

book / *volume*

lie / *perjury*

ill-will / *malice*

kind / *gentle*

native (OE) French

holy

sacred

Latin

consecrated

fire

flame

conflagration

6.

a. archaic and poetic terms: *mere* / *lake*; *ire* / *anger*; *forlorn* / *distressed*

b. varieties of English:

railway (BrE) / *railroad* (AmE); *ranch* (AmE) / *run* (AusE)

c. dialectal English:

mother (BrE) / *minny* (ScotE); *charm* (BrE) / *glamour* (ScotE)

d. euphemisms: *lie* / *distort the fact* (euph); *drunk* / *elevated* (euph)

e. different etymons (borrowings): *firm* (Fr.) / *secure* (Lat.);

7.

cardiac / *heart*, *convulsion* / *fit*, *cranium* / *skull*, *incision* / *cut*, *lesion* / *injury*, *neurosis* / *anxiety*, *psychotic* / *mad*, *trachea* / *windpipe*.

3.3.4. Antonymy

Answers 3.3.4.

1.

upstairs / *downstairs*; *subtraction* / *addition*;

hospitable / *inhospitable*; *likely* / *unlikely*;

benefactor / *malefactor*; *literate* / *illiterate*

2.

non-aggression, *inaccuracy*, *misbehavior*, *non-combatant*, *misconduct*, *illegibility*, *mismatch*, *mispronunciation*, *imprecision*, *irregularity*, *unkindness*

3.

bi-polar oppositions: *male / female; married / bachelor; alive / dead; correct / wrong; buy / sell.*

gradable oppositions:

clean / dirty; young / old; big / small; cheap / expensive; joy / sorrow

4.

host / guest, author / reader, buyer / seller, doctor / patient, interviewer / interviewee, student / teacher, prosecutor / accused, tenant / landlord, clerk / customer.

5.

contradictory:

true / false; open / closed; innocent / guilty; to reject / to accept.

converses:

bridegroom / bride; to give / to take; employee / employer;

6.

gradable antonyms: *dark / light; beautiful / ugly; simple / difficult*

complementary pairs: *alive / dead; absent / present; captive / free, fixed / loose*

converses: *fall / rise; lend / borrow; give / get; give / take.*

7.

ancillary (stamps are popular, but collecting is unpopular)

coordinated (policy is to recruit skilled and unskilled workers)

comparative (those who succeed more than they fail)

(much more is recovered unofficially than officially)

distinguished (the gap between rich and poor has widened)

(the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour)

transitional (how easy to slip from the legal to the illegal trade)

(the transition from old to new technology)

negated (to facilitate the re-establishment of peace, not war)

(if you look at employment, not unemployment)

extreme (except when the soil is too wet or too dry)

idiomatic (it was not permissible to blow hot and cold)

3.4.1. Homonymy

Answers 3.4.1.

1.

a. pray; b. principle; c. reign; d. tow; e. compliment; f. whined; g. nay; h. navel; i. corps; j. dyeing; k. pique; l. council.

2.

beat / beet	brake / break	cent / scent / sent
eye / I	air / heir / ere	hire / higher
illicit / elicit	mane / main	plait / plate
poll / pole	rite / right / write	rode / road
tied / tide	tier / tyre	wave / waive
won / one		

3.

sow /sau/	‘female pig’
sow /səu /	‘to plant seed for growth’
to lead /li:d/	‘to guide on a way especially by going in advance’
lead /led/	‘a bluish-white heavy metal’
rose /rəuz/	‘aflower’
rose / rauz/	past form of the verb <i>rise</i>
wind /wind/	‘natural movement of air’
to win /waind/	‘to turn completely or repeatedly about an object’

3.4.2. Polysemy

Answers 3.4.2.

1.

The polysemantic word *face*:

1. the front part of the head: *He fell on his face.*
2. look, expression: *a sad face, smiling faces.*
3. surface, facade: *face of a clock, face of a building.*
4. (fig.) impudence, boldness, courage; *put a good/brave/ boldface on smth, put a new face on smth, the face of it, have the face to do, save one's face.*
5. style of typecast for printing: *bold-face type.*

3.

polyseme with related meanings: *fraud, point, coat, bed, face, coat*
 homonym with unrelated meanings: *character, ring, club, sole*

4.

The polysemantic word *Romania* refers to an entity with three facets: a) designates a geographical entity; b) the population, a human entity; c) an abstract political entity.

3.4.3. Paronymy

Self-assessed test 3.4.3

1.

<i>centenary</i>	‘the 100th anniversary’
<i>centennial</i>	(US) ‘occurring every 100 years,’ ‘lasting for a 100 years’

<i>cheerful</i>	‘happy,’ ‘in a good mood’
<i>cheery</i>	‘lively’
<i>childish</i>	‘typical of a child’ (shows disapproval when used about adults)
<i>childlike</i>	‘typical of a child,’ ‘innocent’
<i>classic</i>	‘the best’
<i>classical</i>	‘influenced by the art of ancient Greek and Latin literature and language’

2.

	meaning	etymology
<i>momentary</i>	lasting but a moment	1425–1475; late ME. <i>momentare</i> < Lat. <i>mōmentārius</i> ; (<i>moment</i> + <i>-ary</i>)
<i>momentous</i>	‘of great or far-reaching importance’	1645–1655; <i>moment</i> + <i>-ous</i> ;
<i>moment</i>	‘motion, importance, moment of time’	1300–50; ME < Lat. <i>momentum</i> : <i>mō</i> (variant stem of <i>movēre</i> ‘to move’) + <i>-mentum</i> (-ment)
<i>complement</i>	‘something that completes or makes perfect’	1350–1400; ME < Lat. <i>complēmentum</i> something that completes, equivalent to <i>complē (re)</i> to fill up (complete) + <i>-mentum</i> (-ment)
<i>compliment</i>	‘an expression of admiration and respect’	1570–1580; < Fr. < It. <i>complimento</i> < Sp. <i>cumplimiento</i> , equivalent to <i>cumpli-</i> (comply) + <i>-miento</i> (-ment);

3.5.2. Componential analysis of meaning

Answers 3.5.2.

1.

aunt: [-CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION+1], [-MALE], [-DIRECT]

brother: [+CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION 0], [+MALE], [-DIRECT]

mother-in-law:

[-CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION+1], [-MALE], [-DIRECT]

nephew: [-CONSANGUINITY], [-LINE], [GENERATION -1], [+MALE], [-DIRECT]

2.

grandmother: [+N], [+COUNTABLE], [+CONCRETE], [+ANIMATE], [+HUMAN], [-MALE], [+CONSANGUINITY], [+LINE], [GENERATION+2], [-DIRECT]

3.

[+INSTITUTION][+EDUCATION][+BUSINESS][+RELIGION][+ENTERTAINMENT]

4.

The common semantic components are: [+ANIMAL] [+EQUIDAE],
the distinctive components are: [+/-ADULT], [+/-MALE]

horse: [+ANIMAL], [+EQUINE], [+ADULT], [+MALE]

mare: [+ANIMAL], [+EQUINE], [+ADULT], [-MALE]

foal: [+ANIMAL], [+EQUINE], [-ADULT], [+/-MALE]

colt: [+ANIMAL], [+EQUINE], [-ADULT], [+MALE]

filly: [+ANIMAL], [+EQUINE], [-ADULT], [-MALE]

5.

dog, bitch, puppy, wolf, jackal, fox, vixen

common components: [ANIMAL], [CANINE],

distinctive components: [DOMESTIC], [ADULT] [MALE]

6.

mare [ANIMAL] [EQUINE] [FEMALE] is a hyponym of

horse [ANIMAL] [EQUINE]

cub [ANIMAL] [FELINE] [YOUNG] is a hyponym of

lion [ANIMAL] [FELINE]

bookcase [CONCRETE] [INANIMATE] [FURNITURE][STORAGE] is a hyponym
of *furniture* [CONCRETE] [INANIMATE] [FURNITURE]

Glossary of linguistic terms

- abbreviation:** a shortened form of a word or phrase. It consists of a letter or group of letters taken from the word or phrase, e.g. the word *abbreviation* can itself be represented by the abbreviation *abbr.* or *abbrev.*
- ablaut:** a change of vowel in the root of a word that signals a change in grammatical function, as in the forms of the irregular verbs: *sing* – *sang* – *sung*.
- affix:** a morpheme that is attached to a base morpheme such as a root or to a stem, to form a word. Affixes may be **derivational**, like *-ness* and *pre-*, or **inflectional**, like plural *-s* and past tense *-ed*.
- affixation:** a word-formation process in which a stem is expanded by the addition of an affix. A distinction is drawn between prefixation (attachment of the affix before the stem: *un-* + *happy*) and suffixation (attachment of an affix after the stem: *read* + *-er*).
- acronym:** a word formed by taking letters from a phrase that is too long to use comfortably (e.g. *Laser* is an acronym of **L**ight **A**mplification by **S**timulated **E**mission of **R**adiation). If the letters do not make a word, but are pronounced individually, as in the CIA or the BBC, it can be called an **initialism**. Acronyms are regarded as a subgroup of abbreviations.
- Allomorphs:** two or more instances of a given morpheme with different shapes; variants; e.g., [t], [d], and [ɪd] are allomorphs of the English past tense suffix *-ed*.
- antonym:** a word which is opposite in meaning to another word. For example, *male* and *female* are called **ungradable antonyms** (or **complementaries**), *big* and *small* are called **gradable antonyms** (or **gradable pair**).
- back formation** (also **back-derivation**): a process of forming a new word by removing an affix / affixes from an existing word, perceived as morphologically complex (e.g. the verb *to televise* was formed from the noun *television*).

bahuvrihi compound = exocentric compound

base: the element to which compounding or affixation applies to form a morphologically complex word.

binary features: semantic features that come in pairs, e.g.: [MALE] [FEMALE], [ADULT], [YOUNG]

blend: word that results from the combination of two words into one, by deleting material from one or both source words (*smog* < *smoke* + *fog*).

borrowing: a) a word or a phrase which has been taken from one language and used in another (e.g. English has taken *moccasin* 'a type of shoe' from an American Indian Language). When a borrowing is a single word, it is called a **loanword**. b) the importation of a linguistic form from another language.

calque: a word or phrase borrowed from another language by literal, word-for-word or root-for-root translation, such as *by heart* from French *par cœur*.

coinage: the creation of a new word not by any derivational process; also called word manufacture.

collocation: any grammatical well-formed sequence of words. The term refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together, for example, which prepositions are used with particular verbs, or which verbs and nouns are used together. e.g. *do* collocates with *damage*, *duty* and *wrong*, but not with *trouble*, *noise*, and *excuse* (*do a lot of damage*, *do one's duty*, *do wrong*; *make trouble*, *make a lot of noise*, *make an excuse*).

combining form: a bound stem that occurs only in a compound.

complex word: a word made up of more than one morpheme, as opposed to a monomorphemic (or simple) word. A complex word may consist of (a) a base (or root) and one or more affixes (*impossible*), or (b) more than one root in a compound (*living-room*).

componential analysis: an approach to the study of meaning which analyses a word into a set of meaning components or semantic features. (the meaning of the word *boy* may be analysed as: [+HUMAN] [+MALE] [-ADULT]).

- compound word/lexeme:** a combination of two or more lexemes (or words) which functions as a single word. Compounds are written in a single word (*headache*), as hyphenated words (*self-government*), or as two words (*police station*).
- compounding** (also **composition**): the process of combining two words (free morphemes) to create a new word, commonly a compound noun (*sister-in-law*), compound verb (*to water-proof*), or compound adjective (*well-known*).
- compositional:** defined (e.g., a word) entirely in terms of its parts.
- concordance:** a list of lines of text containing a node word, nowadays generated by computer, as the principal output of a search of a **corpus** showing the word in its contexts and thus representing a sum of its usage; see also **KWIC**.
- connotation:** the additional meaning that a word or a phrase has beyond its central, i.e. denotative meaning. These meanings show people's emotions and attitudes towards what the word or phrase refers to.
- conversion:** a word-formation process by which a word is moved from one word class to another. The word *down*, for example, is normally an adverb (*I fell down*). However, it can occasionally be used as a verb (*He downed the drink in one gulp*).
- coordinative compound** (also **dvandva compound**): a compound that refers to multiple referents corresponding to the compound members.
- corpus** (pl. **corpora**) or **text corpus**: a large and structured set of texts (now usually electronically stored and processed) used to do statistical analysis and hypothesis testing, checking occurrences of words or word frequencies. A corpus may contain texts in a single language (*monolingual corpus*) or text data in multiple languages (*multilingual corpus*).
- denotation:** the literal meaning or 'dictionary definition' of a term, devoid of emotion, attitude, and colour.
- derivation:** the formation of new words by adding affixes to other words, or morphemes. Thus, the noun *insanity* is derived from the adjective *sane* by the addition of the negative prefix *in-* and the noun-forming suffix *-ity*.
- derivative:** a lexeme that is related to another lexeme by affixation (*singer* is a derivative of *sing*).

derivational affix: an affix that forms or derives one word from another. (e.g. *-ful* and *-ness* are derivational affixes in: joy + *-ful*, joy + *-ful* + *-ness*).

diminutive affix: an affix with the meaning of ‘little’ or ‘small’ (e.g. *-let* as in *booklet*, *starlet*).

distribution: the sum of the environment where a linguistic form occurs is its distribution.

dvandva compound = coordinative compound.

endocentric compound: a compound word that consists of a head and a dependent element; the meaning of the semantic head is a hyponym of the meaning of the entire compound (a *bathroom* is a hyponym of *room*).

etymon: in historical linguistics, an etymon is a word, word root, or morpheme from which a present-day word has evolved.

etymology n. / **etymological:** adj.: the study of the origin of words, and of their history and the changes they underwent. For example, the etymology of the modern English noun *fish* can be traced back to Old English *fisc*. In the case of the word *meat*, there is a change in meaning. The word comes from the Old English word *mete* which initially meant ‘food in general.’

euphemism: a pleasant replacement of an objectionable word that has pejorative connotations (e.g. *to pass on* for ‘to die’).

folk etymology (also **popular etymology**): involves a change in the form or pronunciation of a word or phrase resulting from a mistaken assumption about its composition or meaning. Thus, Spanish *cucaracha* became by folk etymology *cockroach* in English.

exocentric compound (= bahuvrihi compound): a compound pattern that does not contain a (semantic) head and a dependent.

Germanic languages: a branch of the Indo-European language family. The West Germanic branch includes the three most widely spoken Germanic languages: English, German and Dutch. The main North Germanic languages are Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, and Faroese. The East Germanic branch included Gothic, Burgundian, and Vandalic, all of which are extinct. The common ancestor of all languages in the Germanic branch is called Proto-Germanic, also known as Common Germanic, which was spoken in approximately the middle-1st millennium BC in Iron Age Scandinavia.

- grammatical meaning:** the meaning expressed by an inflectional ending or some other grammatical device, as word order. Thus, for instance, *-ed* with regular verbs indicates past tense, while *-s*, with regular nouns signals the plural.
- hapax legomenon:** a word that occurs only once in a corpus (plural *hapax legomena*). The term comes from the Greek for ‘said once.’
- head:** the constituent of a phrase on which the other elements in the phrase depend.
- headword:** the main word or lead entry in a dictionary
- homographs:** words which are written in the same way but which are pronounced differently and have different meanings (e.g. the verb *lead* and the noun *lead* ‘metal’)
- homonyms:** words which are written in the same way and sound alike but which have different meanings (*to lie* ‘to be in a horizontal position’ and *to lie* ‘not to tell the truth’)
- homophones:** words which sound alike but are written differently and often have different meanings (the words *no* and *know*)
- hypernym:** a word whose meaning encompasses the meaning of another word; a word that is more generic or broad than another given word. For example, *vehicle* is a hypernym of each of the words: *train*, *chariot*, *dogsled*, *airplane*, and *automobile*. A hypernym is the opposite of a hyponym. For example, *plant* is hypernymic to *flower* whereas *tulip* is hyponymic to *flower*.
- hypernymy:** the semantic relation in which one word is the hypernym of another, that is a word with a broad meaning constituting a class into which words with more specific meanings fall as subclasses (*colour* is a **hypernym** of *red*).
- hyponymy:** a relationship between two words, in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word. (e.g. *lorry* and *vehicle* are related in such a way that *lorry* refers to a type of *vehicle*, and *vehicle* is the general term that includes *lorry* and other types of vehicles. The specific term *lorry* is called a **hyponym**, and the general term *vehicle* is called a **superordinate/ hypernym**).
- idiom:** an expression (i.e. term or phrase) whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definition and the arrangement of its parts, but refers instead to a figurative meaning that is known only through conventional use. In the English expression *to kick the bucket*, a listener knowing only the meaning of *kick*

and *bucket* would be unable to deduce the expression's actual meaning, which is *to die*.

inflection: (also **inflectional affixes**): signal grammatical relationships, such as plural, past tense and possession, and do not change the grammatical class of the stems to which they are attached; that is, the words constitute a single paradigm, e.g. *talk, talks, talked*. A verb is said to inflect for past tense, plural, etc.

jargon: the language used by people who work in a particular area or who have a common interest: lawyers, computer programmers, criminals, etc. All have specialised terms and expressions that they use, many of which may not be comprehensible to the outsider.

KWIC: (short for **key word in context**): a computer-generated set of **concordance** lines in which the node word is in the centre of each line.

Latinate suffixes: a class of suffixes in English that historically derive mostly from Latin, or one of its daughter languages (French), via large-scale borrowing of vocabulary; Latinate suffixes combine (almost) exclusively with Latinate bases.

lemma: (also **citation form**): the canonical form of a lexeme, which represents different forms of a lexical entry in a dictionary, as with the English lemma *bring* representing *bring, brings, bringing and brought*.

lexeme: (also **lexical item**): the smallest unit in the meaning system of a language that can be distinguished from other similar units. It is an abstract unit which occurs in many different forms in actual spoken or written sentences. (e.g. all inflected forms such as *sings, singing, sang, sung* would belong to the one lexeme *sing*). Similarly, such expressions as *bury the hatchet, give up, school boy* would each be considered a single lexeme. In a dictionary, each lexeme has a separate entry or sub-entry.

lexeme formation = word-formation.

lexical entry: the collection of information about a lexeme that is included in the lexicon (phonemic information, the grammatical category).

lexical field (also **semantic field**): the organisation of related words and expressions into a system which shows their relationship to one another. The absence of a word in a lexical field of a

language is called a **lexical gap** (e.g. there is no singular noun that covers both *cow* and *bull* as *horse* covers *stallion* and *mare*).

lexical item: any item that is listed in the lexicon, ranging from morphemes to words and to phrases (e.g. idioms).

lexical meaning: the identifiable meaning of a word, the meaning of a base morpheme or word, without reference to any sentence in which the word may occur, and it should be distinguished from **grammatical meaning**.

lexicology n./ **lexicological** adj. / **lexicologist** n.: the study of the vocabulary items (lexemes) of a language, including their meanings and relations (lexical fields), and changes in their form and meaning through time. The research results of lexicologists may be of use to lexicographers.

lexicography n./ **lexicographical** adj./ **lexicographer** n.: field of linguistics that focuses on the design, compilation, use and evaluation of general dictionaries, i.e. dictionaries that provide a description of the language in general use.

lexicon: a) all the words and idioms of a language. More formally, it is a language's inventory of lexemes. b) a dictionary. c) the mental dictionary that speakers of a language unconsciously acquire as they learn a language.

loanword (or **borrowing**): a word adopted from one language (the donor language) and incorporated into the English language without translation, such as *kindergarten*, from German *Kindergarten*, literally meaning 'children's garden.'

mental lexicon: the sum total of all the information a native speaker of a language has about the words, morphemes, and morphological rules of her/his language.

meronym: denotes a constituent part of, or a member of something. For example, *finger* is a meronym of *hand* because a finger is part of a hand. Similarly, *wheel* is a meronym of *auto*.

meronymy: the relationship of meaning between part and whole, as between *arm* and *body*, *sole* and *shoe*.

monomorphemic: containing one morpheme.

morpheme: a morpheme is a meaningful linguistic unit consisting of a word (such as *cat*) or a word element (such as the *-s* in *dogs*) that cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts. Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning in a language. They are commonly classified as either **free morphemes**

- (which can occur as separate words) or **bound morphemes** (which cannot stand alone as words).
- neo-classical compound:** a compound in English that consists of bound bases that are derived from Greek or Latin.
- neologism:** a new lexeme that is attested, but had not previously been observed in the language. Often neologisms are the result of the opening up of new areas of art, science or technology.
- nonce formation** (also **occasionalism**): neologism that has not caught on and is restricted to occasional occurrences.
- noun phrase:** a phrase whose head is a noun (or a pronoun), e.g., *the new houses*; *them*.
- parse:** to analyse a word in terms of its component morphemes. e.g., *blackbirds* can be parsed into *blackbird* plus *s*, and *blackbird* itself parses into *black* plus *bird*.
- phrasal compound:** a compound in which an entire phrase is the dependent member (*an* [[*ate-too-much*] *headache*], *an* [[*I-told-you-so*] *attitude*]).
- phoneme:** a sound that distinguishes words in a particular language (e.g. /p/ and /t/ distinguish *pin* from *tin*).
- polyseme:** a word with multiple meanings that are historically related.
- polysemy:** the term for multiple meanings in a word that are connected historically or semantically.
- portmanteau word:** another term for **blend**.
- prefix:** an affix that precedes the base (e.g. *un-* in the word *unhappy*).
- productivity:** a morphological pattern or rule is productive if it can be applied to new bases to create new words.
- reduplicant:** the copied element in a reduplication.
- reduplication:** a formal operation whereby (part of) the base is copied and attached to the base.
- Romance languages:** a language family in the Indo-European languages. They started from Common Latin. The most important Romance languages are Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, Romanian, and Catalan.
- root:** (also **base form**): a word or word element, i.e., a morpheme, from which other words are formed, usually through the addition of prefixes and suffixes. It is the basic part of a word, which may occur on its own (*man*, *keep*, *hot*), may be adjoined to other roots (*fireman*), or take affixes (*keeper*).
- semantic change** (also **semantic shift**, **lexical change**, **semantic progression**): any change in the meaning(s) of a word over

the course of time. Common types of semantic change include: amelioration, pejoration, broadening, semantic narrowing, bleaching, metaphor, and metonymy.

semantic feature (also **semantic component**): the basic unit of meaning in a word, e.g. [+human], [+male]. The meanings of words may be described as a combination of semantic features.

semantics: a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of words.

sememe: a unit of meaning. A sememe can be the meaning expressed by a morpheme, such as the English pluralizing morpheme *-s*, which carries the sememic feature [+PLURAL]. Alternately, a single sememe (for example [GO] or [MOVE]) can be conceived as the abstract representation of such verbs as *skate*, *roll*, *jump*, *slide*, *turn*, or *boogie*. A **seme** is the smallest unit of meaning recognised in semantics, referring to a single characteristic of a sememe.

slang: informal language, using expressions that many would consider to be grammatically imperfect and sometimes rude. It often used within small social groups where it can help draw and keep the group together.

stem: (also **base form**) that part of a word to which an affix can be added to produce another word. The stem of a word may consist of: a) one morpheme (root) (*work*); b) a root plus a derivational affix (*work* + *-er* = *worker*); c) two or more roots (*work* + *shop* = *workshop*).

stress shift: a type of base modification that involves changing the syllable in a word with which primary stress is associated.

suffix: an affix that follows the base (e.g. *-less* in the word *careless*)

superordinate: a general term that includes various different words representing narrower categories, called hyponyms.

syllable: a unit of organisation for a sequence of speech sounds. It is typically made up of a syllable nucleus (most often a vowel) with optional initial and final margins (typically, consonants). Syllables are often considered the phonological “building blocks” of words.

synonym n./ **synonymous** adj./ **synonymy** n.: a word which has the same, or nearly the same, meaning as another word.

syntagmatic relations: relations between units that (potentially) follow each other in speech (e.g. collocations, idioms).

taboo: words considered unacceptable in ‘polite society.’

- (technical) term:** a lexical unit consisting of one or more words which represents a concept inside a domain.
- terminology:** branch of linguistics primarily interested in term formation and terminological variation.
- thesaurus** (pl. **thesauruses/ thesauri**): a word book in which words are arranged thematically to help the user in selecting the right word for a specific purpose. Words are organized by categories and concepts, so synonyms and near-synonyms are grouped together (e.g. the concept ‘amusement’ groups the following words: *fun, frolic, merriment, jollity, joviality, laughter*).
- word:** an individual unit of language that contains both lexical and grammatical meaning(s).
- word class** (also **part of speech**): a small set of grammatical categories to which words can be allocated, for example: nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, article, numeral, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection.
- word-class:** a category of words such as ‘noun,’ ‘verb,’ ‘adjective,’ ‘adverb,’ etc.
- word-formation:** the ways in which new words are made on the basis of other words or morphemes.
- word frequency:** the frequency with which a word is used in a text or corpus.
- zero-derivation** (also **conversion**): a word-formation process; the creation of a word from an existing word without any change in form (the verb *to clean* is converted from the adjective *clean*).

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Monolingual learner's dictionaries (or MLD)

There are currently six major MLDs for advanced learners of English, all of them being available in hard copy and online:

a) hard copy:

- *** (2000) *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- *** (2008) *Merriam-Webster's advanced learner's English dictionary*. Springfield: Merriam-Webster.
- *** (2012) *MacMillan English dictionary for advanced learners*. Oxford: MacMillan.
- *** (2013) *Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary with CD-ROM*, 4th edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- *** (2015) *Longman dictionary of contemporary English*, 6th edn. Harlow: Pearson Education.

b) online:

- *** (2007) *Chambers 21st century dictionary*.
(<http://www.chambers.co.uk/dictionaries/the-chambers-21st-century-dictionary.php>)
- *** *Collins Cobuild English dictionary*.
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- *** *Longman dictionary of contemporary English*.
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- *** *Macmillan English dictionary for advanced learners*.
(<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>)

*** *Merriam-Webster's advanced learner's English dictionary.*

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A History of the English Lexicon.

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