
The structural properties of the lexical field of the words

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Abstract: This article is devoted to analyse the structural properties of the lexical field of the words. Lexical field reveals the characteristics by which common properties are determined for a number of objects, actions, phenomena, and also establishes differences that distinguish the given object, action, phenomenon.

Key words: Lexical, structural, conversion, derived words, morpheme, semantic distinction, word-building, compounds.

Before turning to the various processes of making words, it would be useful to analyse the related problem of the composition of word, i.e. their constituent parts. If viewed structurally, words appear to be divisible into smaller units which are called morphemes. Morphemes don't occur as free forms but only as constituent of words. Yet they possess meaning of their own. All morphemes are subdivided into two large classes: roots (or radicals) and affixes. That latter, in their turn, all into prefixes which precede the root in the structure of the word (mis-pronounce, un-well) and suffixes which follow the root and affixes (or several affixes) are called derived words or derivatives and are produced by the process of word building known as affixation.

Derived words are extremely numerous in the English vocabulary. Successfully competing with the structural type is the so-called root word which has only a root morphemes in its structure. This type is widely represented by a great number of words belonging to the original English stock or to earlier borrowings (house, room, etc.) and, in Modern English, has been greatly enlarged by the type of word-building called conversion.

Another wide spread word structure is a compound word consisting of two or more stems (e.g. dining room, mother-in-law). Word of this structural type are produced by the word building process called *composition*. The somewhat odd-looking words like flu, pram, lab are called *shortenings*, *contractions* or *curtailed words* and are produced by the way of word buildings called *shortening (contraction)*.

The four types (root words, derived words, compounds, shortenings) represent the main structural types of Modern English words, conversion, derivation and composition the most productive ways of word buildings.

The morpheme is generally defined as the smallest indivisible component of the word possessing a meaning of its own. There are numerous derived words whose meanings can really be easily deduced from the meanings of their constituent parts. Yet, such cases represent only the first and simplest stage of semantic readjustment within derived words. The constituent morphemes within derivatives do not always preserve their current meanings and are open to subtle and complicated semantic shifts.

The lexic semantic distinctions of words produced from the same root by means of different affixes are also of considerable interest, both for language studied and research work. Compare: womanly-womanish. The semantic difference between these words are very obvious: the meaning of the suffixes are so distinct that they colour the whole words. *Womanly* is used in a complimentary manner about girls and

women, whereas *womanish* is used to indicate an effeminate man and certainly implies criticism. The type of composition of word-building, in which new words are produced by combining two or more stems, is one of the three most productive types in Modern English; the other two are conversation and affixation. Compounds, though certainly fewer in quantity than derived or root words, still represent one of the most typical and specific features of English word-structure. There are at least three aspects of compositions that present special interest. The first is the structural aspect. Compounds are not homogeneous in structure. Traditionally three types are distinguished: neutral, morphological, and syntactic.

In neutral compounds the process of compounding is realized without any linking elements, by a mere position of two stems, as in *blackbird*, *shopwindow*, *bedroom*, etc. The examples above represent the subtype which may be described as simple neutral compounds: they consist of simple affixes stems. Compounds which have affixes in their structure are called derived or derivational compounds.

Morphological compounds are few in number. This type is non-productive. It is represented by words in which two compounding stems are combined by a linking vowel or consonant.

In syntactic compound we once more find a feature of specifically English word structure. These words are formed from segments of speech, preserving in their structure numerous traces of syntagmatic relations typical of speech: articles, prepositions, adverbs, as in the nouns.

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