Processes of Word Formation/ Part 2

Clipping

Clipping is a type of abbreviation of a word in which one part is 'clipped' off the rest, and the remaining word now means essentially the same thing as what the whole word means or meant. For example, the word *rifle* is a fairly modern clipping of an earlier compound *rifle gun*, meaning a gun with a rifled barrel. (*Rifled* means having a spiral groove causing the bullet to spin, and thus making it more accurate.) Another clipping is *burger*, formed by clipping off the beginning of the word *hamburger*. (This clipping could only come about once *hamburg+er* was reanalyzed as *ham+burger*.)

Acronyms
Acronyms are formed by taking the initial letters of a phrase and making a word out of it. Acronyms provide a way of turning a phrase into a word. The classical acronym is also pronounced as a word. *Scuba* was formed from *self-contained underwater breathing apparatus*. The word *snafu* was originally WW2 army slang for Situation Normal All Fucked Up. Acronyms were being used more and more by military bureaucrats, and soldiers coined *snafu* in an apparent parody of this overused device. Sometimes an acronym uses not just the first letter, but the first syllable of a component word, for example *radar*, RAdio Detection And Ranging and *sonar*, SOund Navigation and Ranging. Radar forms an analogical model for both *sonar* and *lidar*, a technology that measures distance to a target and and maps its surface by bouncing a laser off it. There is some evidence that *lidar* was not coined as an acronym, but instead as a blend of *light* and *radar*. Based on the word itself, either

etymology appears to work, so many speakers assume that *lidar* is an acronym rather than a blend.

A German example that strings together the initial syllables of the words in the phrase, is *Gestapo* , from GEheime STAats POlizei 'Sectret State Police'. Another is *Stasi*, from STAats SIcherheit 'State Security'. Acronyms are a subtype of initialism. Initialisms also include words made from the initial letters of a Phrase but NOT pronounced as a normal word - it is instead pronounced as a string of letters. Organzation names aroften initialisms of his type. Examples:

NOW (National Organization of Women)
US or U.S., USA or U.S.A. (United States)
UN or U.N. (United Nations)
IMF (International Monetary Fund)

Some organizations ARE pronounced as a word:
UNICEF
MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

The last example incorporates a meaning into the word that fits the nature of the organization. Sometimes this type is called a Reverse Acronym or a Backronym.

These can be thought of as a special case of acronyms.

Memos, email, and text messaging (text-speak) are modes of communication that give rise to both clippings and acronyms, since these word formation methods are designed to abbreviate. Some acronyms:

NB - Nota bene, literally 'note well'. Used by scholars making notes on texts. (A large number of other scholarly acronyms from Latin are used, probably most invented in the medieval period or Renaissance, not originally in Latin)
BRB - be right back (from 1980s, 90s)
FYI - for your information (from mid 20th century)
LOL - laughing out loud (early 21st century) - now pronounced either /lol/ or /el o el/; has spawned

compounds like *Lolcats*).
ROFL - rolling on the floor laughing
ROFLMAO - rolling on the floor laughing my ass off

Reanalysis
Sometimes speakers unconsciously change the morphological boundaries of a word, creating a new morph or making an old one unrecognizable. This happened in *hamburger*, which was originally *Hamburger steak* 'chopped and formed steak in the Hamburg style, then *hamburger (hamburg + er)*, then *ham + burger*

Folk etymology
A popular idea of a word's origin that is not in accordance with its real origin.

Many folk etymologies are cases of reanalysis in which the word is not only reanalysis but it changes under the influence of the new understanding of its morphemes. The result is that speakers think it has a different origin than it does.

Analogy
Sometimes speakers take an existing word as a model and form other words using some of its morphemes as a fixed part, and changing one of them to something new, with an analogically similar meaning. *Cheeseburger* was formed on the analogy of *hamburger*, replacing a perceived
morpheme *ham* with *cheese*. *carjack* and *skyjack* were also formed by analogy.

Novel creation
In novel creation, a speaker or writer forms a word without starting from other morphemes. It is as if the word if formed out of 'whole cloth', without reusing any parts.

Some examples of now-conventionalized words that were novel creations include *blimp*, *googol* (the mathematical term), *bling*, and possibly *slang*, which emerged in the last 200 years with no obvious etymology. Some novel

creations seem to display 'sound symbolism', in which a word's phonological form suggests its meaning in some way. For example, the sound of the word *bling* seems to evoke heavy jewelry making noise. Another novel creation whose sound seems to relate to its meaning is *badonkadonk*, 'female rear end', a reduplicated word which can remind English speakers of the repetitive movement of the rear end while walking.

Creative respelling

Sometimes words are formed by simply changing the spelling of a word that the speaker wants to relate to the new word. Product names often involve creative respelling, such as *Mr. Kleen*.

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