

Leon Levițchi – Archive. 16



A Course in English Lexicology 1963

Ediție facsimil în 3 volume
Volumul 2

With all the efforts of the lexicographers, no dictionary can be 'perfect': between the first moments of its compilation and the moment of its printing, new words and meanings make it lose its 'up-to-dateness'. But, quoting Dr. Johnson : "Dictionaries are like watches : the worst is better than none". To say nothing of the poetry they contain - at least according to Oliver Wendell Holmes : "When I feel inclined to read poetry I take down my dictionary."

Editat de
C. George Sandulescu
și
Lidia Vianu

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CENTENAR LEVIȚCHI

A Course in English Lexicology

Ediție facsimil în 3 volume

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Editat de C. George Sandulescu și Lidia Vianu

Anul acesta se împlinesc 100 de ani bătuți pe muchie de la nașterea Profesorului de limbă și literatură engleză Leon D. Levițchi. ESTE CENTENARUL LEVIȚCHI.

*

Nu există grămătic mai însemnat decât Leon Levițchi pentru profesorul de limba engleză din România. A scris gramatici din care toți urmașii lui au învățat structura limbii engleze, și cum poate ea fi predată vorbitorului de limba română. A făcut cele mai bune dicționare dintre câte avem. A tradus integral William Shakespeare. A predat lexicologie. A scris „Învățați limba engleză fără profesor”. A scris istoria literaturii engleze și americane.

Leon Levițchi [Radio România, 1973]

“Well – you see – quite, quite accidentally, I belong to an older generation; and quite, quite accidentally, for twenty years on end I taught English grammar to our students; and I taught them in the spirit of Charles Bally and Harold Palmer, not in that of Chomsky.... I do not in the least believe in the idea that the history of linguistics should be divided into two: the pre- and the post-Chomsky period. I should rather say: I believe in things that can be demonstrated and I do not believe in things that cannot be demonstrated. If – if! – the new achievements of linguistics can prove that we have been in the wrong, and the new achievements are in the right, all the better –

we shall surrender to them: but, if they cannot justify themselves, all the worse – we shall not surrender, and we shall go on saying that it is much much better to speak of subject and predicate than of subject and predicate group (SG, or PG)."

Leon Levițchi [Radio România, 1972]

L.L: "...an Austrian professor invited me to join an international society of lexicographers."

Announcer: "Does that imply practical or theoretical activity?"

L.L: I don't know yet; I only hope it will be applied linguistics – a discipline which I personally like very much. Of course, I like theory as well, but only if it is based on applied linguistics."

C. George Sandulescu

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Lidia Vianu
Director

C. George Săndulescu
Executive Advisor



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Holograph list of the
40 languages
used by James Joyce
in writing *Finnegans Wake*

Director
Lidia Vianu

Executive Advisor
C. George Sandulescu

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1963

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Volumul 2

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4. Etymological Doublets

Etymological doublets are words which, though apparently differing in form, are nevertheless, from an etymological point of view, one and the same. In point of meaning they present different degrees of difference, e.g.

human - characteristic of man;

humane - showing the best qualities of human nature;

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amiable - lovable;
amicable - friendly.
troth / trou θ/ (old use) truth; faithfulness;
 in ~ indeed
truth - agreement with fact.

As to their origin doublets may be classified as follows
(Rayevskaya) :

a) native doublets, b) Scandinavian doublets, c) doublets of French and Latin origin, d) doublets of Greek origin, e) miscellaneous doublets.

a) Native doublets
bench - bank ; morrow - morn
b) Scandinavian doublets
shirt - skirt ; from - fro ; no - nay
c) French and Latin doublets
captain - chieftain ; hospital - hostel, hotel;
secure - sure ; treble - triple
d) Greek doublets
chord - cord ; scandal - slander
e) Miscellaneous doublets
sherbet - syrup

5. Dialects

Roughly, English dialects may be classified as follows :
a) northern dialects; b) midland dialects; c) eastern dialects;
d) western dialects; e) southern dialects. They are all characterized by lexical and grammatical peculiarities.

The main characteristic feature of the vocabulary (and grammar) of contemporary English dialects is extreme stability: a very great number of words which were ousted from the national English language in different periods of its development are preserved (frequently with certain modifications) in contemporary dialects, e.g. to dree (OE dreogan) - to do; stevvon (OE stefn) - voice, etc.



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It is noteworthy that the English vocabulary outside England (in the U.S., Australia, Canada, India, etc.) contains a great number of words characteristic of English dialects. On the other hand, this vocabulary exerts a certain influence on contemporary literary English and also on colloquial English - on slang above all.

B. WORD-FORMATION

1. New Forms or Grammatical Functions

a. A f f i x a t i o n

Affixation is the use of affixes - prefixes, infixes, and suffixes - with the roots or stems of different words so as to form with these new words in a language. Prefixes precede the root of a word, changing its meaning, but generally not influencing its morphological status, e.g. to come - to overcome; clear - unclear; correctly - incorrectly, etc. Suffixes are placed after the root of a word. They change its meaning, and, quite frequently, its morphological status as well, e.g. beauty - beautiful; clear - clearness; light - lightly, etc.

1) P r e f i x e s

Germanic :

be - (about; over) : to besprinkle, to bedim,
(thoroughly, completely) : to besmear.
for - (away, off) : to forswear, to forbid.
in - (into) : insight, inlet.
mis - (badly, wrongly, etc.): to mislead, to
misunderstand.



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out - (out of) : to outlive, to outshine.
over - (above, beyond): to overeat, to overflow.
under - : to undertake, to undergo.
un - (not...) : to undo, unfriendly, unnecessary.
up - upright, upset.
with - (opposite, against) : to withstand.

Romance

a-, ab-, abs- (from) : to abuse, to abstain.
ad- (to); by assimilation : af-, an-, etc.: to
adhere, to accredit, to affirm, to attract.
bi-, bis- (two, twice) : bi-partition, bi-lingual, bi-monthly.
com-, con-, co- (with); by assimilation: cog-,
col-, etc.; to compress, to concatenate, to
cohere, cognate, to collide.
de- (implying separation, depriving, etc.) : to
depart, to deprecate.
dis-, di- (with a negative force): to displease,
to dislike, to diverge.
en- (into, in) : to enclose, to enlarge, to en-
kindle, to enact.
ex-, e-, ef- (out of, from) : to extend, edi-
tion, to efface.
in-, il-, ir- (with a negative force) : inef-
fectual, illiberal, irrational.
non- (with a negative force) : non-English.
ob-, op- (against, to, upon, over): to oblite-
rate, to oppose.
pre-:(before) : to predict.
pro- (before, for, etc.) : to propose.
re- (back; again) : repetition, to reread.
sub-, suc-, etc. (under): subject, succinct.



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Greek

an-, a- (with a negative force): anomalous, ac-
phalous.

di- (twice): diphtong.

ec- (out of): eccentric.

Prefixes are generally unproductive in Modern English.
Exceptions: un-, re-, dis-, under-over-, mis-, anti-, pro-,
pre-.

2) S u f f i x e s (adapted after V o r n o ,
Anglijskaya leksikologhia)

1° Noun-Forming Suffixes

α) N o u n s d e n o t i n g
b e i n g s a n d o b j e c t s

P r o d u c t i v e

-er (Germanic) - denotes the doer of an action:
worker, teacher, giver, transmitter, ciga-
rette-lighter.

-ist (Greek) - denotes the adherent to a social
system, to a philosophy, to a literary
current, etc. : communist, socialist, chart-
ist, realist.

It may also denote the member of a pro-
fession: typist, dramatist, novelist.

-ee (English-French) - characterizes persons :
absentee, adoptee.

-ess (French) - forms the feminine gender of
certain nouns : shepherdess, heiress,
actress.



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Less Productive and Unproductive

-ese (Italian) - denotes the origin of a person:
Chinese, Veronese.

It may also denote a style: journalese,
telegraphese, Johnsonese.

-eer, -ier (French) - denotes persons in connection with the object of their occupation:
musketeer, gondolier.

Sometimes it has a deprecatory meaning:
profiteer, sonneteer (poetastru)

-ling (Germanic) - deprecating when used to denote persons, diminutival when used to denote birds and animals: hireling, weakling, duckling.

-ster (Germanic) - denotes profession: brewster, gamester.

-ite (Greek) - denotes adherents to a political movement, to a mass movement, etc.: Lenin-ite, luddite.

-or (Latin) - denotes persons in accordance with their profession: doctor, actor, sculptor, councillor.

It may be used to denote instruments: accumulator.

β) S u f f i x e s U s e d t o F o r m A b s t r a c t N o u n s

Productive

-ism (Greek) - gives nouns the meaning of 'teaching', 'doctrine': Marxism, Communism, classicism.

-ing (Germanic) - denotes processes: teaching, doing, coming.

-ness (Germanic) - denotes state or quality: kindness, happiness.



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Unproductive

- ship (Germanic) - denotes state or quality :
friendship, kinship.
- hood (Germanic) - denotes state: widowhood,
neighbourhood.
- dom (Germanic) - denotes state: freedom.
- th (Germanic) - forms nouns mainly from ad-
jectives: truth, breadth, length.
- age (Romance) - denotes totality: tonnage.
Also action: leakage.
- ance, -ence (Romance) - denotes processes :
continuance, appearance, preference.
- ment (Romance) - denotes processes: movement,
betterment.
- tion, -ation, -sion, -ion (Romance) - denotes
processes and results of processes: mu-
tation, continuation, possession, erosion.

2^o Adjective-Forming Suffixes

Productive

- ish (Germanic) - denotes quality: boyish,
whitish.
- ed (Germanic) - means "endowed with", "hav-
ing", when combined with certain nouns,
chiefly nouns denoting parts of the body
or clothes: horned, blue-eyed, dark-haired,
long-legged, short-necked, felt-hatted.
- ly (Germanic) - used with nouns, denotes the
quality characteristic of the respective
noun: manly, friendly.
With nouns denoting time, it expresses
the quality of chronological regularity :
yearly, monthly.
- y (Germanic) - forms adjectives expressing
the quality characteristic of the noun to



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which the suffix is appended: windy, rainy, dirty, noisy.

-less (Germanic) - added to nouns, it denotes the absence of what is expressed by them : useless, formless, fearless.

-able (Romance) - forms adjectives meaning "capable to suffer the action denoted by the basic word" : readable, understandable, detestable.

Unproductive

-ful (Germanic) - denotes the quality characteristic of the noun to which it is attached: beautiful, peaceful, useful.

3° Verb-Forming Suffixes

Productive

-ize, -ise (Greek) - used with certain adjectives and nouns, it gives the verb the meaning of "to bring into the condition expressed by the basic word": to fertilize, to utilize, to Latinize.

Unproductive

-en (Germanic) - used with adjectives; it has much the same meaning as -ize, -ise : to whiten, to darken, to deepen.

-fy, -ify (Romance) - comparable with -ize, -ise, and -en : to intensify, to magnify.

4° Adverb-Forming Suffixes

Productive

-ly (Germanic) - added to adjectives: beautifully, scientifically.



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Unproductive

-ward(s) (Germanic) - implying direction : backward(s), forward(s).

b. C o n v e r s i o n

Conversion is the process by which a part of speech is changed into another part of speech: a noun into a verb, an adjective into an adverb, etc., e.g.

paper (hirtie) - to paper (a tapeta); new (nou)
- the new (noul); down (jos) - to down (a coborî).

Conversion is an extremely frequent phenomenon in English, a fact which is explained above all by the loss of inflexions or endings (Old English was characterized by full endings, Middle English by levelled endings, Modern English by lost endings.) As a result of the loss of inflexions, different parts of speech in Modern English have very few specific forms (as may be seen in the chapter dealing with suffixes) and thus shifting from one part of speech to another is made easy.

In the period of Early Modern English (after 1500), conversion asserted itself vigorously. Shakespeare's works contain a great number of converted parts of speech, e.g.

- Adjectives changed into nouns :

Edmund the base shall top the legitimate.

(King Lear, I, 2, 19)

They strike a meaner than myself.

(Antony and Cleopatra, II, 5, 83)

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind ?

(Titus Andronicus, V, 3, 48)



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- Adverbs changed into adjectives:

Lucius' banishment was wrongfully.
(Titus Andronicus, IV, 4, 76)
Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly ?
(Macbeth, IV, 1, 126)

- Adverbs changed into nouns:

What seest thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time ?
(The Tempest, I, 2, 50)

- Pronouns changed into nouns:

I'll bring my action on the proudest he that
stops my way
(Taming of the Shrew, III, 3, 236)
You are the cruellest she alive.
(The Two Gentlemen of Verona, I, 5, 259)

- Pronouns changed into verbs:

If thou thouest him some thrice, it shall not
be amiss.
(Ibid., III, 2, 48)

- Nouns changed into verbs:

... mousing the flesh of men
(King John, II, 354)
... we'll a birding together
(Merry Wives, III, 3, 247)

Most of the examples above - taken at random - prove that in Early Modern English conversion assumed more varied forms than it does today; in contemporary English, for example, the use of adverbs in -ly instead of adjectives is quite unusual, etc.



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At present the most active domains of conversion belong to nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Thus, a very great number of nouns (irrespective of their origin) may be also used as verbs, e.g.

tattoo - to tattoo; drum - to drum; radio - to radio;
co-star - to co-star; vacation - to vacation;
telescope - to telescope; bee-line - to beeline;
highlight - to highlight, etc.

She co-starred in another film.

They vacationed in the country.

He telescoped the sentence.

Verbs used as nouns:

to hit - hit; to ride - ride; to go - go; to broadcast - broadcast; to turn-round - turning round, etc.

Have a go at it !

Did you listen to the broadcast of the football match ?

The new Rumanian play is quite a hit (success).

His words were a hit (a stroke) at me.

They went for a ride before supper.

Nouns used as adjectives:

trial match; rock-plant; field-flower, etc., etc.

Converted words may be divided into two distinct groups:

- words which have been incorporated into the general word stock of the English language, e.g. to tattoo, go, trial (as an adjective), etc.;

- words which are converted occasionally ('nonce-words' - 'nonce' - 'the present use, occasion, or time'), as in:



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"We would sleep out on fine nights and hotel it,
and inn it, and pub it when it was wet."

(J. K. J e r o m e , Three Men in a Boat.)

c. C o m p o s i t i o n

Composition is a device by means of which new words are formed as a result of the semantic-grammatical combination of two or more words (also roots or stems). The graphic and phonetic elements may be also taken into account, e.g.

blackboard (semantically: a fusion between 'black' and 'board' resulting in a new notion - 'tablă neagră', unlike the free combination 'black board' - 'scindură neagră'; grammatically: a fusion between 'black' and 'board', which no longer allows the adjective 'black' to form degrees of comparison, as it has become an unchangeable part of the compound word; graphically: the two words are written together, in a single word; phonetically: the pronunciation of 'blackboard' [blækbo:d] differs from that of 'black'board' [blæk'bo:d]).

butterfly (semantically: a fusion between 'butter' and 'fly', not a mere free combination 'butter' and 'fly'; grammatically: 'butter', out of a noun, becomes an adjective of the relative type; graphically: the two words are written together; phonetically: the new word bears the stress on the first part of the compound: ['bʌtəflai].)

make-believe (a noun, meaning 'pretence; feigning') (semantically: a fusion between 'make' and 'believe'; grammatically: the verb 'believe' becomes a noun, and the verb 'make' suggests a change into a relative adjective; graphically: the two words are hyphenated; phonetically: the new word bears the stress on the first part of the compound ['meɪkbiːliːv] - not ['meɪk biːliːv]).

to broadcast (semantically: a fusion between the root 'broad' of the adverb 'abroad' and the verb 'cast', narrowing down the meaning of the free combination 'to cast abroad' to



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'radio-broadcasting' or, on the contrary, enlarging it to the idea of 'sending out in all directions', of 'scattering'; grammatically: a fusion between the two elements, which no longer allows the adverb 'abroad' to be used predicatively; graphically: the two words are written in a single word; phonetically: the stress is on the first element of the compound [ˈbrsɔːdkɑːst].

There are cases when the general meaning of a compound is the simple sum of the meanings of the component elements, e.g. sunheat (sun + heat), night-time (night + time), etc.

It is not always easy to distinguish a compound from a free combination, but the following criteria may be taken into consideration:

- in a compound, the semantic-grammatical connection between its component parts is so close that it becomes a fusion, which makes it possible to compare the compound with a simple word, e.g. the compound blackboard may be compared and used in the same group (or series) with chair, map, table, etc. (In the classroom there were two maps, three pictures and a blackboard.) - but not with a white board, a yellow board, etc.

- in a free combination, the close, organic semantic connection is absent; thus, a good book is comparable with a bad book, a boring book, a more interesting book, etc. - but not with an exercise-book, a pen, a satchel, etc.

Composition Looked Upon Historically

Composition is one of the oldest devices employed to form new words. We find it amply represented in Old English, e.g.

elnboza - elbow (turn of the arm);
feowertyne niht - fortnight (fourteen nights);
saluwig-pad - dark-coated, etc.



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Kennings - metaphorical compounds found mainly in Old English poetry - were often used, e.g.

sae-swan (sea-swan) for ship, etc.

The Renaissance gave a new impetus to word-composition, particularly in the domain of stylistic or poetical compounds. Shakespeare offers many illustrations of beautiful compounds, either innovations or ordinary everyday phrases wrought into his works with poetic genius, e.g.

all-eating, never-resting, new-appearing, long-since-cancelled, swart-complexioned, well-deservings, silver-white, etc.

- Examples from Milton (the 17th century) :

meek-eyed Peace, shame-fac'd Night, ever-during (ever-lasting), heart-easing Mirth, etc.

- Examples from Keats (beginning of the 19th century):

deep-delved Earth, leaden-eyed Despair, fast-fading violets, etc.

- Examples from Shelley (beginning of the 19th century):

star-inwrought, rain-awakened flowers, heavy-winged thieves, etc.

Today word composition is particularly frequent in the field of science and technique, in newspapers, etc., e.g.

health education, health exhibition, health habit (deprindere igienică), health hazard (pericol pentru sănătate), health legislation, health maintenance (serviciu medical), health officer (agent sanitar), health organization, health service, health worker, etc.



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Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are extremely frequent in contemporary English. We can distinguish them from free combination on criteria already mentioned, as well as by taking into account that the first element in a compound noun can never be determined by an adverb. Compare:

It is a blackbird (compound noun).

It is a quite black bird (free combination).

Compound nouns are sometimes written in a single word (e.g. classroom), sometimes in words written separately (e.g. water fowl) or separated by means of a hyphen (e.g. dining-room) – no definite rules can be given in this respect.

Note. Fowler, in Modern English Usage (p.243), speaks of the 'chaos prevailing among writers or printers or both regarding the use of hyphens' in English.

Elements of which compound nouns are formed :

noun + noun : classroom, safety-razor, motor-car; shepherd's pipe, ship's biscuit; drawing room.

adj. + noun : sweetheart, singing bird, black-bird.

pron. + noun : he-goat, she-wolf.

vb. + noun : clasp-knife, makeshift, pickpocket.

vb. + vb. : make-believe.

adv. + noun : through-train, uptrain, outhouse.

vb. + adv. : drawback, turn-out.

adv. + vb. : welcome, welfare, upkeep.

adv. + past.p. : by-gones.

Other combinations: will-o'-the-wisp, editor-in-chief, etc.

Here are a few recent noun compounds: windcheater (-anarak), weatherwear (-clothes worn to protect one against



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the weather), walkie-talkie (- a portable radio set), teen age (-the age between 13 and 19), teen-ager (- boy or girl aged between 13 and 19), spun sugar (- sugar spun into fine threads), speedbird (coll. - aeroplane), outsize (-unusually large size), sit-down strike (- a strike in which workers remain in the place where they work, refusing to work or leave until some agreement is reached), etc.

As the inflexion of the synthetic genitive is not productive in contemporary English, nouns composed by means of 's represent old formations, often replaced by analytical forms (e.g. calf's skin - also calf skin, etc.).

The logical relations between the various elements of which a compound noun is formed are multiple, e.g.

goldfield - a field containing gold;
classroom - a room in which classes are held;
steamboat - a boat propelled by steam;
evil-doer - a man who does evil, etc.

One cannot generalize as to the stylistical value of English compound nouns depending on the elements of which they are formed. The only exception seems to be represented by the nouns formed by means of onomatopoeic reduplication, which generally have a familiar humorous character, e.g. tittle-tattle, puff-puff, fiddle-faddle.

C o m p o u n d A d j e c t i v e s

Elements of which compound adjectives are formed :

adj. + adj.: dark-blue, light-yellow.
noun + adj.: colour-blind, weather-wise, crystal-clear.
adv. + adj.: evergreen.
adv. + pres. part. : well-meaning, ill-meaning, easy-going (calm).
adv. + past p. : well-meant, ill-timed.



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adj. + noun + ed : bare-footed, long-legged, red-coloured.

noun + pres.p. : heart-rending, life-giving.

noun + past p. : weather-beaten, moonlit.

Other combinations : out-of-door (occupations, etc.), weather-proof, etc.

C o m p o u n d P r o n o u n s

The number of compound pronouns is rather limited in English: everybody, every one, anyone, myself, etc. whoever, whatever, whichever, etc.

C o m p o u n d V e r b s

There are two distinct types of compound verbs in contemporary English:

Compound verbs proper, the component elements of which are either written together or connected by means of a hyphen, e.g.

noun + verb : to waylay (to ambush);

adv. + verb : to broadcast;

adj. + verb : to whitewash, to back-slide.

Complex verbs, a variety of verb compounds made up of a principal verb and an adverbial particle (up, in, out, through, etc.) which modifies the original meaning of the former, e.g.

to bring round/to - to restore (smb.who has fainted);

to bring about - to cause;

to bring up - to educate;

to call off - to annul, to cancel;

to carry out - to effect;

to catch up - to become level with;

to cut up - to cut into pieces;



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to drop in - to pay a short visit;
to fall out - to quarrel;
to fall back - to withdraw;
to get up - to rise from one's bed, etc.
to get off - to dismount; to leave, etc.

A number of complex verbs are formed of a principal verb and an adverb or adjective, e.g.

to drive home (a bate un cui etc. pînă la capăt);
to break loose;
to fall flat (despre o glumă etc.- a nu prinde);
to fall due (a avea scadența);
to fall short (a se împuțina), etc.

C o m p o u n d A d v e r b s

Compound adverbs are made up of a single word which can be easily decomposed into morphological elements, e.g.

beforehand, throughout, thereabout(s), thereby,
hereby, therefrom, wherefrom, whereabouts, etc.

A variety of compound adverbs is represented by complex adverbs, which are made up of a preposition or an adverb plus another adverb, e.g.

at once, before long, from before (din față);
soon after, close by, hard by, over there, long
since, long before, upside down, etc.

C o m p o u n d P r e p o s i t i o n s

Examples: within, throughout, into.

Complex prepositions, which are a variety of compound ones, are usually made up of an adverb or a preposition plus another preposition, e.g.



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out of, because of, from inside, etc.

D i s g u i s e d C o m p o u n d s

Disguised compounds are a variety of compounds the elements of which have blended in such a way that they can no longer be distinguished, e.g.

nincompoop (a corruption of the Latin 'non com-
pos mentis');
smog (smoke + fog);
to hustle (to hurry; to push roughly) (hurry +
bustle);
to shimmer (shine + glimmer);
to jounce (to shake, as in riding) (jump + bounce);
motel (motor + hotel) (hotel pt. automobiliști);
transceiver (transmitter + receiver) (stațiune de
emisie-recepție);
cinemactor (cinema + actor), cinemactress (cinema
+ actress).

Disguised compounds are also termed 'blends' or 'tele-
scoped words'.

d. C o n t r a c t i o n

A very old device connected with word-formation (it dates as far back as the 13th century), contraction means the partial reduction of a word. It may assume the following three forms:

Aphaeresis - the reduction of the first part of a word,
e.g.

vanguard (Fr. avantgarde), car (motor-car),
'change (exchange), bus (omnibus), story (history),
phone (telephone), squire (esquire), plot (com-
plot), sample (example), fence (defence), etc.



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Syncope - the reduction of the middle part of a word,
e.g.

nurture (Fr. nourriture), mart (market), ma'am
(madam), etc.

Apocope - the reduction of the last part of a word, e.g.

photo (photograph), pub (public house), cab (cabriolet), exam (examination), prof (professor), stud (student), vac (vacation), ed (editor), sub (submarine), perm (permanent), prefab (prefabricated), vet (veteran), etc.

e. A b b r e v i a t i o n

Abbreviation based on the reduction of a word or group of words to initial letters is an extremely frequent device in contemporary English, as is proved by the Slovarj anglijskih sokraschenij, recently published in the Soviet Union, and containing about 30,000 abbreviations.

In point of orthoepy, abbreviations may be divided into:

Cases when the respective initial letters are read as a combination of the alphabet letters, e.g.

TV ['ti: 'vi:] (television);
DG ['di: 'dzi:] (double glass);
FH ['ef 'eit] (foghorn);
MP ['em 'pi:] (1. Member of Parliament;
2. military police).

Cases when the group of initials is read as if it formed a word, e.g.

radar ['reida:] (radio detection and ranging);
UNO ['ju: nou] (United Nations Organization).

Other cases:

assn (association);
fmn (formation).



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GP / 'dʒi: 'pi:/, jeep /dʒi:p/ (general purpose car).

Certain abbreviations ~~can~~ also have plural forms, e.g.
the P.O.W.'s (the prisoners of war).

f. C h a n g e
o f t h e M o r p h o l o g i c a l A c c e n t

A number of nouns have become verbs (and viceversa) by the mere shifting of stress, e.g.

<u>Nouns</u>	<u>Verbs</u>
'abstract	to abstràct
'accent	to accēnt
'compound	to compōund
'conduct	to condūct
'contest	to contèst
'contrast	to contrast
'decrease	to decreàse
òbject	to objèct
pèrmit	to perìt
'present	to presēnt
pròduce	to producé
'progress	to progrèss
'protest	to protèst
'record	to recòrd
'subject	to subjèct
'suspect	to suspèct
'torment	to tormènt
'transport	to transport
'upset	to upset.

g. D e f l e c t i o n
(Sound Interchange. Root Inflexion)

Deflection means derivation based on vowel change in the root of words, e.g.

Fasc.4 Cda 681/963



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song - to sing; loss - to lose; blood - to bleed;
width - wide; breadth - broad; length - long;
stew - stove; full - to fill; hot - heat; breach -
to break; belief - to believe; glass - to glaze,
etc.

At present, deflection is an unproductive device.

h. B a c k - F o r m a t i o n

In accordance with back-formation, a part of a word is erroneously interpreted as a derivative suffix, or, less frequently, as a prefix. Thus, it was supposed that the noun puppy (derived from the French poupée) comprises the suffix -y; hence the form pup. The nouns beggar, pedlar, hawker, and editor, felt or interpreted as agent-nouns with the suffix -er (-or), have given rise to the verbs beg, peddle, hawk, and edit. Before the last years of the 16th century, the noun pea was never used in the language; till then only pease was circulated, but as soon as it was felt as a plural, a singular was coined. Much in the same manner we have got: to televise (from television), to peeve (from peevish), to burgle (from burglar), to cobble (from cobbler), etc.

In the 20th century a new variant of back-formation has appeared, namely the creation of verbs from compounds (mainly technical terms), e.g. to blood-transfuse (from blood-transfusion), to force-land (from forced landing), to finger-print (from finger-printing), to babysit (from baby-sitter), etc.

1. F o l k - E t y m o l o g y

Folk-etymology represents a process by means of which new words are formed as a result of the fact that certain words or groups of words have been mispronounced or misinterpreted, on the basis of their similitude with other, simpler words in the language. Thus, for example, about the middle of



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the 17th century the word asparagus came into being with its subsequent transformation into sparrow-grass; in the 18th century, asparagus was resumed in literature, while sparrow-grass became a vulgarism. Other examples: salt-cellar actually comes from salt + saler (saler - a vessel to hold salt); greyhound (grey - interpreted as a colour, whereas it actually meant hound in Norse; therefore hound + hound); buttery ("cămară") has been associated with butter, but it actually comes from the Latin botaria (a place where drinks were kept: bota - a cask); walnut has been wrongly associated with wall - it actually comes from Welsh (or Walsh), that is 'foreign', etc.

j. Corruption

Corruption differs from folk-etymology in that it simply distorts an already existing word, without connecting it with another; that is why its specific domain is that of foreign words and phrases, e.g.

jeopardy (from the French 'jeu parti') (an evenly matched game).

na-poo (slang) (from the French 'il n'y en a plus').

kickshaw (in Shakespeare's English) (from the French 'quelque chose').

k. Words derived from Proper or Personal Names

Quite a number of proper or personal names have become common words by a change of meaning and specialization, e.g.

lynch - a shameful practice in the USA by which Negroes are killed by the whites (the word comes from Judge Lynch of the United States who resorted to it);

boycott (also the verb to boycott) - refusal to do any business with a country, firm, person, etc. (the word comes from captain Boycott who was agent for the Irish estates of



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a British peer about 1880 ; he became so unpopular because of his harsh treatment of the tenants that an organized strike was planned against him);

quisling - a person who intrigues with a foreign power to betray his own country (the word comes from a Norwegian Nazi, Major Quisling, who assisted the Germans in their invasion of Norway in 1940);

to bowdlerize - to remove supposedly offensive passages from a book, etc.; to expurgate (after Dr. Thomas Bowdler, who in 1818 published an expurgated edition of Shakespeare);

macadam (also the verb to macadamize) - 1. small broken stones, used in making roads; 2. a road made with layers of such stones)after John MacAdam - 1756-1836 -, a Scottish engineer who invented the process);

champagne - any effervescent white wine (after Champagne, in France);

holland - a linen or cotton cloth (after Holland, where it was first made);

mercury - a silver-white metallic chemical element (after Mercury, a god in Roman mythology);

bedlam - a hospital for the mentally ill (from Bethlehem Bedlam, such a hospital in London), etc.

1. C o n s c i o u s , D e l i b e r a t e C o i n a g e s

The history of the English language offers examples of words that have been coined deliberately by different writers, men of science, etc.

In the Early Modern English period, Shakespeare was one of the most important creators of words, e.g. to incarnadine, multitudinous, dauntless, to dwindle ('to diminish'), to foot ('to kick'), sick of ('tired of'), to accost (somebody), to castigate, auspicious, etc.

The ever greater development of science in modern times has entailed the conscious creation of thousands and thousands



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of scientific and technical terms, e.g. biology, telephone, television, dictaphone, semaseology, etc.

2. Old Forms and Grammatical Functions

A special chapter of Word-Formation is represented by what lexicology usually calls 'Change of Meaning' - preservation of the form and (in most cases, at least) of the grammatical function of a word, with a more or less marked change of meaning or lexical value.

In the usual 'explanatory' type of dictionaries, the semantic changes that a word undergoes in the course of its evolution are marked by its various meanings (commonly specified by figures). But the historical principle is far from being observed by all these dictionaries; more often than not it is the principle of 'frequency' or 'circulation' which prevails, with the result that the most general or frequent meaning of a word is placed first, irrespective of chronological evolution, then comes the next meaning, less general or frequent than the first, yet more general and frequent than the third, and so on. The noun WALL, for instance, presents the following image in a couple of monolingual English dictionaries :

WALL, n.: 1. a solid structure, usually vertical, made of stone, brick, wood, concrete, etc., forming one of the sides of a building or a room; 2. the inside surface of any vessel or hollow space. (A.S.Hornby et al., The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, London, 1958.)

WALL, n.: 1. Continuous and usually vertical and solid structure of stones, bricks, concrete, timber, etc. serving to enclose (partly) or protect or divide off town, house, room, field, etc.; 2. Something resembling in appearance or



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effect; 3. (Position next) as opposing kennel side of street footpath; 4. Side as opposing centre of road. (COD, Oxford, 1954.)

WALL, n.: an upright structure of wood, stone, brick, etc. serving to enclose, divide, support, or protect; specifically: a) such a structure forming a side or inner partition of a building; b) such a continuous structure serving to enclose an area, separate fields, etc.; c) usually in pl. such a structure used as a military defense; fortification; d) such a structure used to hold back water; levee; dike; 2. something resembling a wall in appearance or function; 3. something suggestive of a wall in that it holds back, divides, hides, etc. (Webster's New World Dictionary, Cleveland and New-York, 1952.)

In an etymological dictionary we may find the following kind of information:

Wall. (L.) A.S. weall, borrowed from L. vallum, a rampart, originally a row of stakes. Cf L. vallus, a stake, palisade, lit. protection. Allied to O. Irish fál, a hedge. (W. S. K. e. a. t, A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. Oxford, 1911.)

It is in an 'explanatory' dictionary based on historical principles that the derivation of a meaning from another is more obvious than anywhere else, e.g. in the Oxford English Dictionary :

Wall (OE wall, L. vallum)
825 a defensive structure enclosing a city, castle, etc.
900 a rampart of earth, stone, etc. for defensive purposes.



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- 900 each of the sides and vertical divisions of a building.
1225 fig. a barrier.
1300 an enclosing structure built round a garden, etc.
1330 an embankment to hold back the water of a river or the sea.
1412-1430 fig. applied to a person or thing that serves as a defence (L y d g a t e : 'For he of Troye is the mighty wall'.)
1436 fig. the sea ('the walls of England'.)
1528 place or means of torture (out of use long ago.)
1592 fig. defence.
1599 fig. in the phrase 'within the walls'- 'within the limits' (e.g. 'within the walls of Europe'.)
1606 the inner side of a pavement.
1677 anat. the lining tissue of an organ, etc.
1697 something that resembles a wall.
1728 mining the coating or crust of a lode.
1797 mil. in the phrase 'in wall' - of battalions extended in one continuous line (out of use long ago.)
1830 the outer horny covering of the foot of a horse.

Also, short for :
wall-tree,
wall-flower.

The last illustration shows how complex is the life of words in a language, to what semantic, grammatical, and phonetic changes they are subjected - all this as a result of the people's necessity to express, in different ages, either new notions or shades. The essence of the process residing in the semantic history of words, it is the task of lexicology to register it whenever it is possible, devoting it a special chapter which is generally entitled Change of Meaning.



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a. Causes Determining
the Change of Meaning

The word, as the material form expressing a notion, reflects the evolution or shifting of the notion in connection with the development of the conscience.

Thus, the process of passing from concrete to abstract, characteristic of human thinking very frequently affects the change of meaning in different words, e.g.

The noun road was originally used only in its concrete meaning; later on it was used also in the abstract sense of 'way' or 'method of achieving something', as in 'the British road to socialism.'

The verb to grasp originally meant 'to seize', 'to clutch'; later on it also acquired the meaning of 'to understand' as in 'I don't quite grasp what you mean.'

Other examples :

fabric : 1. woven material; 2. structure, framework - in 'the fabric of society'.

frame : 1. a border of wood or other material ;
2. state of mind - as in 'He was in a happy frame of mind'.

sour : 1. having an acid taste; 2. bad-tempered
- as in 'Why is he so sour today'?

light: 1. the antonym of 'darkness'; 2. aspect -
as in 'They viewed the child's behaviour
in a favourable light'.

Next, mention should be made of another mental process which is reflected in the change of meaning, viz. the passing from the particular to the general, e.g. in the word home:
1. one's abode ; 2. one's own country.

A people's history and culture, its ever greater knowledge of objective reality, the new discoveries and inventions, etc. - all of these have a bearing on the semantic changes of words. Thus, for example, the noun mill, once meaning exclusi-



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vely 'a building with machinery for grinding grain into flour' (moară) came to be likewise applied to a 'factory' (e.g. 'a textile mill', 'a paper mill'.)

Other examples :

- press : 1. a machine for pressing, e.g. 'wine-press';
2. a machine for printing - also 'printing press'.
cap : 1. a covering for the head ; 2. anything like a cap in use or shape, as a cap on a bottle.
pencil: 1. F.-L., a small hair-brush for painting;
2. an instrument for writing with.
pen : 1. a quill-feather ; 2. a similar instrument with a nib.

It is noteworthy that a number of words belonging to a specific domain are often transferred to a new domain with a change of meaning. I.V. Arnold in his Leksikologhia anglijskovo jazyka mentions that "a whole series of words connected with such a new branch of technique as aviation have appeared by changing the meaning of certain nautical terms". Examples: pilot, cabin, cockpit (the pilot's cabin), course, navigation (cf air-navigation), to sail ("a plana"), stern ("pupa"), etc.

Many of the examples so far listed in connection with the causes determining changes of meaning are also indebted to the very important mental process of association, materialized in the semantic evolution of words by metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, etc. - figures of speech which shall be treated in a special chapter (see page 278). In the meanwhile, compare the pairs of meanings below, of which the second represents a semantic change based on association:

- box : 1. a container made of wood, cardboard, or metal ("cutie"); 2. anything similar in shape to box (1); case, chest, a small hut or wooden shelter, a small compartment in a theatre, etc.



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- pipe : 1. a whistle; 2. a tube for conveying water, gas, etc.
- nose: 1. part of the face; 2. anything that sticks out like a nose, e.g. the front part of a ship.
- lame : 1. suffering from an injury or a defect, especially in a leg or foot; 2. fig. (of an excuse, argument, story, etc.) unsatisfactory; unconvincing, etc.

The main linguistic cause determining changes in the meanings of words resides in the influence which context exercises on them. Words are not used isolated in speech; they are connected and interconnected within the framework of sentences, that is to say of organized lexical-phonetical-grammatical structures expressing our thoughts and feelings. Consequently, a new combination of words in a sentence may bring about semantic modification in the respective words of the combination.

The most obvious illustrations may be found in the different senses of some basic word-stock English verbs, each of which changes its meaning - historically, it is in this way that each of them changed its meaning - depending on the word or words by which it is accompanied. Compare:

- He showed the picture to his friend.
- The State Farm won prizes for the fruits it showed. (i.e. displayed at an exhibition.)
- He showed himself yesterday. (i.e. appeared publicly.)
- Why do you show off ? (i.e. Why do you want to impress people by making a display of your abilities ?)
- He showed his teeth. (i.e. He was angry.)
- They showed him the door. (i.e. They asked him to leave the house.)
- Show me how to do it. (i.e. Teach me how to do it.)



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The dog showed signs of intelligence. (i.e. The dog manifested intelligence), etc.

Many English words have undergone a change of meaning which lies in the addition of what may be termed emotional connotation to their primary sense or senses: a word initially used to merely state a fact was later on used to express the speaker's emotional attitude, too. Thus, the adjectives enormous (L. "e" - out of; "norma" - rule, standard), extraordinary (L. "extraordinarius", "extra ordinem" - outside the usual order), and extravagant (L. "extra" - outside, and "vagans, -tis" - wandering.) Formerly they simply meant that something passed ordinary or prescribed limits, e.g. an enormous appetite (an abnormal appetite); an extraordinary occurrence (an occurrence which was not in the ordinary course of things); extravagant behaviour (behaviour which did not conform to the accepted rules of decency.) But if we employ these words now we mean to indicate not only that what is referred to is unusual or abnormal, but that it is to such a degree as to excite our wonder, indignation, or contempt.¹

As a rule, contraction (see page 59) does not imply a change of meaning (although style is generally affected); yet there are cases proving the contrary, e.g. history-story, example-sample, defence-fence, etc.

Ellipsis, as a more comprehensive phenomenon than contraction proper, offers numerous examples of change of meaning in words otherwise enjoying their old-established significations.

A most characteristic example is the verb will (would) sometimes meaning will (would), go, leave, start, etc. in Shakespeare's English, e.g.

I'll to my book. (The Tempest, III, 1, 94.)

I'll in. (The Merry Wives of Windsor, III, 3, 145.)

He is very sick and would to bed. (Henry V, II, 1, 87.)

I'd with thee. (Coriolanus, IV, 1, 57.)

1 V.A. Koonin, English Lexicology, Moscow, 1939 (condensed).



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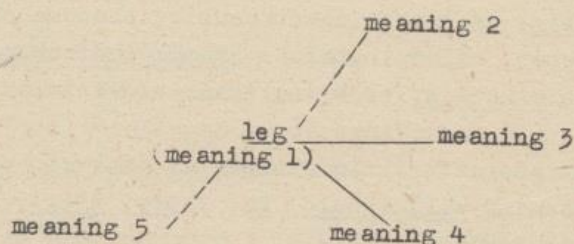
b. Possible Connection
between the Different Meanings
of a Word

The different meanings of one and the same word are the result of the semantic change either of the basic meaning or of some later meaning acquired by the respective word in the course of its history. The connections which are thus established between the meanings of a word have been classed in two distinct groups : 1) radiation, and 2) concatenation.

1) Radiation is the name of the semantic process in which the new meanings of a basic word are derived from it in a direct way, not unlike rays from one centre (L.radiatio). Some of the meanings of the noun leg offer a good example:

- leg 1. (basic meaning) one of the parts of the body by means of which men and animals stand and walk; 2. the part of a garment covering the leg; 3. a bar or pole used as a support or prop.; 4. one of the supports of a piece of furniture; 5. one of the branches of a forked or jointed object.

Graphical representation :



2) Concatenation is another semantic process by means of which new meanings are added to the first by successive shifts (meaning 2 from meaning 1, meaning 3 from meaning 2, etc.). Here is an example:

- gold 1. (basic meaning) a precious metal; 2. gold coin; 3. money; 4. riches, wealth.



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Graphical representation :

gold
|
meaning 1
|
meaning 2
|
meaning 3
|
meaning 4, etc.

Radiation and concatenation are frequently present in one and the same polysemantic word, as is the case of the noun board which may be represented as follows:

1 board (a plank)
|
2 (an extended surface of wood)
|
3 (a table) 8 (the side of a ship)
| |
4 (the food served at a table) 6 (a council table)
| |
5 (meals provided regularly for pay) 7 (council)

Radiation : 3-4, 3-6; 2-3, 2-8

Concatenation: 1-2-3-4-5; 1-2-3-6-7; 1-2-8.

c. Main Semantic Directions
in Which Changes
of Meaning Occur

There are four principal directions in which the different changes of meaning occur in the history of words:

a) extension of meaning; b) narrowing of meaning; c) degradation of meaning; elevation of meaning.

a) Extension of Meaning. Extension of Meaning is a semantic process by means of which the meaning of a word is extended, becoming more comprehensive. During this process



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the new meaning thus created does not necessarily oust the initial meaning, as, for example, in the case of the noun boat which originally meant 'a small open vessel moved by oars' (barcă), and in course of time came to mean 'any vessel used for travelling on water', thus a large steamer, a sailing ship, a yacht, etc. (a convenient translation may be "ambar - cațiune") - with the preservation of the first meaning (barcă).

In different books of lexicology 'Extension of Meaning' is rendered by the term 'Generalization of Meaning', which we have already used in the sense of one of the extra-linguistic causes (a mental process) determining changes of meaning. Most of the cases of 'extension of meaning' are based on 'generalization of meaning', yet there are sufficient instances when the meaning of a word is simply extended, without being generalized, e.g. the second meaning of the noun wall see p.) - 'a rampart of earth, stone, etc. for defensive purposes', derived from the basic meaning 'a defensive structure enclosing a city, castle, etc.' Generalization always implies passing from species to genus, whereas in the above case we only have a passing from species to species. Another example is the noun thing, one of the oldest senses of which in English seems to have been 'that which is agreed upon as fitting', while today it may mean almost everything - so much so that in certain cases it seems to lose its semantic value, as in: 'It is a very good thing', or 'The thing is that...', or 'That is the thing', or 'The thing (= What) he had in mind was...', etc. In this and in similar cases we can hardly speak of 'generalization'. These are the reasons why we shall stick to the term 'Extension of Meaning'.

Here are a few more examples of 'extension' - with or without 'generalization' :

person L. persona, from personare, 'to sound through' : persona was a special mask used in the theatre, which, by a special device, enabled the actor's voice to be heard by the spectators of a wide open-air theatre. In course of time, it came to mean 'the actor who wore such a mask', then 'the character played by an actor', then 'a man, somebody'. Cf "Dramatis Personae".



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place came into English from Latin where it meant a 'broad street' (platea), in its turn derived from Greek (plateia - a broad street or square in a city; cf Gr. platys - broad; cf Rumanian "plat" ; cf ModE 'flat' .) The word now means 'a part of space' or 'a (any) locality'. (In Rumanian it has developed into 'market-place' - "piață".)

season, today 'one of the four parts of the year' or 'a part of the year associated with a special activity, occurrence, etc.' is an extension of the Latin word "satio, -nis" - 'seedtime, sowing'.

to calculate, today 'to reckon', comes from the Latin "calculare" - 'to reckon by means of little stones' (cf ModE "calculus" as a medical term.)

b) Narrowing of Meaning. Narrowing of Meaning is a process opposed to Extension of Meaning: a word of wide meaning acquires a narrower sense, which is applied (alongside the first meaning or ousting it) to some or only to one of the objects it had previously denoted. Likewise, a word of wide usage is restricted in its application and becomes 'specialized'.

Thus : 'The River' to a Londoner is 'The Thames'; 'The Channel' means 'The English Channel'; 'The Rock' means 'Gibraltar'; 'The City' means the business centre of London, etc.

A common type of 'narrowing' is the shift from an abstract to a concrete meaning. Thus, a man may be styled 'a failure', 'goodness itself', 'a success', 'one's hope', 'one's ruin', etc.

Another type of 'narrowing' is to be explained by the frequent association of a word with specific modifiers. This is the case with room, which once meant 'space' (today preserved in certain collocations, such as : 'to make room', 'no room for', 'plenty of room', etc.) From the 15th century onwards, this word came to have its modern narrowed meaning ('section of space in a building'), as a result of such frequent combinations as 'sleeping-room', 'eating-room', etc.

A number of words have become specialized by the addition and then by the dropping of adjectives or adjectivized



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nouns, e.g. car (any vehicle on wheels) - motor-car - (by aphaeresis) car (motor car); 'corpse' (living or dead body) - 'dead corpse' - (by aphaeresis) 'corpse'; play (different meanings) - 'stage play' - (by aphaeresis) play, etc.

Technical language employs a great many words whose meaning or meanings are specialized in comparison with their common signification or significations, e.g. 'head' (the prow of a vessel), 'ram' a metal projection on the bow of a ship- (pintenul unui vas), 'tooth' (of a comb), etc.

Borrowings have often caused the narrowing in the meaning of certain native words. Thus, when the OE token (a sign, any sign) was replaced by sign, its meaning was gradually restricted to a small number of collocations such as 'love token', or 'token of respect'. The native stool, which initially meant 'any kind of seat for one person', has now a restricted meaning (Rum. taburet) because of chair (Fr.), adopted to denote a more luxurious piece of furniture in use among the Norman conquerors. In old English deer meant 'any kind of animal' (cf G. Tier); its meaning was gradually restricted because of beast (Fr.) and animal (L).

c) Degradation of Meaning. In accordance with the process of 'degradation', a neutral word becomes deprecating. Many 'degraded' words show a marked class attitude on the part of those who degrade them, e.g.

villain (fr. villein) initially meant a 'farm-labourer', replacing the native word 'churl' (OE ceorl); later on, however, it became a term of contempt in the speech of the nobles, 'one who did not belong to the gentry'; in 1303 it acquired the meaning of 'low-born base-minded rustic'; in later use - an unprincipled or depraved scoundrel.

churl, today meaning 'one who is rude in manners', initially meant 'a male human being' (800); then 'a man without rank' (1000); 'a serf' (1225); a base fellow, a villain (1300).

boor, originally 'a farmer' (cf G. Bauer), gradually came to mean 'an ill-bred fellow' in accordance with the following stages: 'a husbandman, peasant, countryman' (1430); 'a rustic with lack of refinement' (1598); 'a rude, ill-bred fellow' (1598).



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knave has a history similar to that of 'villain'. Originally it meant 'a boy' (cf G.Knabe), then 'a servant', and finally 'a person with rude manners'.

varlet, formerly meaning 'a servant', has now become a synonym of 'a scoundrel'.

Other examples:

silly (OE saelig) originally meant 'happy' or 'innocent'; also 'poor'. This sense is preserved in the ballad Robin Hood Rescuing the Widow's Three Sons :

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day
And there he met a silly (poor) old woman,
Was weeping on the way.

The Silly Isles (in the Atlantic Ocean) remind us of the old belief of the Celts that after death their great heroes went to dwell in those 'happy islands'.

In Shakespeare we find it with the following meanings :
harmless, innocent, helpless, e.g. shepherds looking on their silly sheep (Henry VI, II,5,43);

plain, simple, e.g. there was a fourth man, in a silly habit (Cymbeline, V,3,86);

poor, e.g. silly beggars who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame (Richard II, V,5,25);

simple, witless, foolish, e.g. this is the silliest stuff that I ever heard (A Midsummer Night's Dream, V, 212);

sanctimonious (L. sanctimonia - 'holiness') has been coloured by contempt for the pharisaical.

d) Elevation of Meaning. 'Elevation' is the reverse of 'degradation', implying the process by which a new meaning of a word acquires a 'higher' status in comparison with the initial one. Thus

Mod. steward comes from OE stign, literally 'a sty-warden';

knight (OE cniht) once simply meant 'a boy';

fame originally meant 'report', 'rumour';



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minister formerly meant a servant ;
comrade comes from the Spanish "camarada" - 'a
room-mate'.

On the other hand, a host of abusive terms may be used
as caresses owing 'to the whimsicality of affection', e.g. old
dog, old screw, rascal, rogue, licky dog, etc.

d. Metaphors and Other Figures
of Speech Having a
Bearing on Semantics

Quite a number of figures of speech, although properly
belonging to the domain of 'style' or 'stylistics', should be
studied by lexicology, too, as they are frequently apt
to enrich the vocabulary of a language with new meanings - a
process based on man's power of association, which determines
numerous changes of meanings in different words.

a) Metaphor. In order to better understand the essence
of metaphor, it would be useful to start from comparisons and
similes.

A comparison merely establishes similarity between two
or more notions which are essentially alike, e.g.

The mountain you see is as high as the other (mountain).

A simile compares notions essentially dissimilar, making
use of some notes which make the parallel possible. Thus, in
The Mask of Anarchy, Shelley uses two graphical similes in the
stanza in which he urges the English people to fight against
their oppressors :

Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep have fallen on you -
Ye are many - they are few.

(XXXVIII)



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The words men and lions, on the one hand, and chains and dew on the other, do not belong to the same notional categories; yet Shelley associates them on the basis of one common feature : the idea of force which characterizes lions and should also characterize the English people in their fight; and the idea of transitoriness, transferred to 'chains' in order to show that they, too, can be as easily shaken off as dew.

Shelley's similes are purely 'stylistical' - they are the creation of a poet, used in a particular context for the sake of vividness and intensity. On the other hand, in the English language, as in all other languages, there are numerous instances of similes which have become the asset of the whole people, being commonly used orally and in writing, e.g.

as busy as a bee (about somebody);
as blind as a bat;
as cross as nine highways;
as dark as pitch;
as drunk as a lord;
as dull as a beetle;
as fierce as a goose;
as fit as a fiddle;
as fresh as a rose is in June;
as grave as an old gate post;
as green as grass;
as hungry as a wolf/horse/church-mouse;
as lazy as Ludlam's dog, that leaned his
head against the wall to bark;
as like as two peas;
as long as a Welsh pedigree;
as meet as a sow for a saddle;
as merry as a cricket;
as plump as a partridge;
as red as a cherry;
as soft as silk;
as sweet as honey;
as weak as water.



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A metaphor also compares two dissimilar objects, but it treats the one as if it were the other: it identifies them. A metaphor can be extended into a simile - it is an implied simile. Thus, in The Vision of Judgement, Byron calls the English king

'This old, blind, mad, helpless, poor worm' -

a metaphor which may be developed into the simile :

'the king...who was like an old, blind, mad, helpless, poor worm'.

Metaphors are often used for the sake of ornament; but if they are correct (logical) and felicitous, the stylistic effect obtained becomes an important means by which clarity, graphicalness, and concision are achieved. A successful metaphor is a condensation of semantic values, as well as a condensation of sentences into parts of the sentence, e.g.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail...

(S h e l l e y , The Cloud.)

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,

Is the immediate jewel of their souls.

(S h a k e s p e a r e , Othello.)

He's something stain'd

With grief, that's beauty's canker.

(S h a k e s p e a r e , The Tempest.)

In all the examples so far quoted, the metaphors were used for the sake of ornament, being of the stylistic kind. Yet, not unlike similes, metaphors can also be lexical - namely in those cases when they have become part and parcel of the language, e.g. 'the ship of the desert' instead of 'the camel'; 'the head of a nail', 'the nose of a ship', 'the legs of a table', etc. all of which are metaphorical transfers of words used in other senses.

Lexical metaphors may be profitably studied from the point of view of their life and duration, distinction being made between :



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live metaphors; degraded (fading) metaphors; and dead metaphors.

Live Metaphors. Live metaphors are specifically represented by 'stylistical' metaphors; but the amount of lexical metaphors of the 'live' type should not be underrated.

A metaphor is said to be of the live type when it is felt as new and fresh; this characteristic applies both to stylistical and lexical metaphors, with the addition that both enjoy limited currency. As to duration in time, stylistic live metaphors may have a very long life, as long as the life of the literary, etc. work in which we find them, and as long as they do not become standardized, that is part of the language of the whole people. Compare :

But look, the Morn in russet mantle clad...

(S h a k e s p e a r e , Hamlet.)

(This metaphor was devised by Shakespeare in 1601, and we read it with a feeling of novelty, of freshness; but it has not become part of the language.)

All the world's a stage...

(S h a k e s p e a r e , As You Like It.)

(This metaphor has now become hackneyed; it has become part of the language - no longer a live metaphor, but a degraded (fading) one.)

How about the life-span of live lexical metaphors? The rule is that they have a short life : if they are retained by the language, their novelty and freshness disappears and thus they change their character, becoming degraded (fading) metaphors.

Ample illustrations of lexical live metaphors are to be found in slang, whose words and phrases generally have a short life; they either die out of the language or are used more and more until, losing their novelty and freshness, they become colloquial forms. Here are some examples of slang (lexical live metaphors) :

Fasc.5 Cda 681/963



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laughing water (alcohol)(since 1925 - not used
by the English people at large);
coal-hell (coal-mine)(1846; about 1900);
to kick the bucket (to die) was once slang; now
it is a highly colloquial expression.

Degraded Metaphors. Degraded (fading) metaphors still convey to the reader or listener some of their former freshness (when they were 'live' metaphors), although they have already become 'commonplace' or 'trite'. In such a phrase as 'to sift the evidence', to sift still preserves its semantic connection with its concrete meaning (a cerne). 'The ship of the desert' for 'the camel' is commonplace enough now, yet the initial graphicalness has not been lost altogether. The same may be said about 'depth' (adîncime) in the following collocations : 'the depth of one's insight', 'the depth of winter', 'the depth of a forrest', 'the depth of night', etc.

Zoosemy (the use of various nouns denoting animals for the characterization of human beings) is a lexical chapter in which degraded metaphors are well represented. It is extremely rich in contemporary English, e.g.

a fox (a sly person); a bear (a morose person); a book-worm (a person who studies very much); a cat (a spiteful woman); a calf (a beginner, a tyro); a chicken (a young woman); a gay dog (a gay person); a donkey, a rabbit (a stupid person); a lion (an important person); a monkey (a naughty child); an oyster (a silent person), etc.

Idioms, too, are essentially connected with metaphors of the degraded type; like the latter, they are generally long-lived. Examples of idioms based on degraded metaphors:

to break the ice (to make the first step);
one's sheet anchor (as lit. 'a reserve anchor' -
fig. one's only hope);
to give smb. a leg up (to give smb. a helping
hand), etc.



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Dead Metaphors. Dead metaphors have now lost every metaphorical implication, although special etymological studies may reveal it, e.g. daisy (OE *daeges eage*), window (OE *windes eage*).

Note. Live, degraded, and dead metaphors should be generally translated by live, degraded, and dead metaphors in the language into which the translation is made.

b. Metonymy (from the Greek *meta-change*, and *onoma-name*, hence 'a change of name') is a figure of speech by means of which the name of an object is replaced by one of its significant attributes, by some function it discharges, etc. In other words, metonymy is based on a direct, real semantic connection between the object and its peculiar aspect which is apt to be used to characterize it as a whole, in contrast with metaphor, where this connection is indirect and imaginary; to say nothing of the fact that a metaphor can be extended into a simile, while a metonymy cannot, e.g.

a book-worm (a metaphor : indirect and imaginary semantic connection between 'a man' and 'a book-worm'; it can be extended into a simile : 'This man is like a book-worm'.)

Iron, in the sense of 'smoothing iron' (a metonymy : direct and real semantic connection with 'iron', the metal of which it was originally made; it cannot be extended into a simile.)

Metonymies may be grouped as follows :

The name of an object expressed by one of its attributes, e.g.

'cradle' and 'grave' instead of 'birth' and 'death' with which they are closely associated; we often find them used in the collocation 'from the cradle to the grave', for example in Shelley's Song to the Men of England :

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
drain your sweat - nay, drink your blood ? (II)



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'the cowls' instead of 'the monks', a cowl being a characteristic garment of monks, etc.

The part used for the whole, and the whole used for the part, e.g.

'fox' - the animal (the whole) used instead of a 'fox's fur' ('fox' - the part.)

'a hand' (a part) used instead of 'a man, a worker' (a whole - 'a man doing manual work'.)

The instrument used for the agent, e.g.

'the sword' - instead of 'the army', 'an army', 'men bearing swords, weapons, etc.', 'fighters', etc.

The holder for the thing held, e.g.

'the gallery' - instead of 'spectators in the gallery';

'the pulpit' - instead of the 'clergy' ;

'the camp' - instead of the 'army' , as in E.Jones .

Song of the Wage-Slave :

The camp, the pulpit and the law
For rich men's sons are free ...

The maker's name used for the thing made and the name of a place used instead of a thing coming from it, e.g.


In 'I have read Shakespeare', 'Shakespeare' actually means 'Shakespeare's works'.

'holland' comes from 'Holland' , etc. (see page 85)

Like metaphors and other figures of speech, metonymies, too, are classed as 'stylistical' and 'lexical' in accordance with the same criteria. The examples above are mostly lexical.

Note . We have not treated synecdoche as a figure of speech apart, including it with metonymy as many authors do (e.g. Galperin, in Oчерки по стилистике английского языка, Moscow, 1958).






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