



Lesson1.9

Chinese vs English: Morphology/ Word-formation

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Introduction

- ▶ Word-formation is also called morphology, which studies formation or construction rules of words.
- ▶ A lot of English words have rules to follow, so master the rules of the word formation can be of great help in learning English vocabulary.
- ▶ Traced back to 1860s, “morphology” as a linguistic term that used in biology. It came into being in the study of the “evolution” of words in the Indo-European and their 400 or 500 basic roots, particular in the hope of solving the “riddle” of the origin of language.
- ▶ In its modern sense, morphology is essentially synchronic, primarily concerned with the forms of words through the use of morpheme construct.

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- ▶ In Chinese, **characters** are free minimal units. Each is a root and can combine with other roots to make new words, so majority Chinese words are compound words.
 - ▶ Compared to Chinese, English has more affixes, especially more prefixes than Chinese.

Word-formation techniques

- ▶ **Compounding** 复合
- ▶ **Derivation** 派生
- ▶ **Abbreviation** 缩写
- ▶ **Borrowing** 借词
- ▶ **Conversion** 转化

Compound words 复合词

- ▶ English compound words refer to words that are made up of two or more free morphemes, such as words are combined by nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives or prepositions.
- ▶ There are **three** ways to represent the compound words, i.e.
- ▶ write the word in a single word such as **bedroom**,
- ▶ or use a hyphen to connect the morpheme such as **mother-in-law**,
- ▶ or write with a space between the elements such as **post office**.

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- ▶ Compounding is the most productive process of word formation in Chinese modern language. As Jerry Norman states that by far the greatest numbers of words in the dictionaries are compounds.
 - ▶ A compound consists of at least two morphemes neither of which is an affix:
 - ▶ **zhuo bu (tablecloth)** 桌布
 - ▶ is a compound because it is made up of two root morphemes.
 - ▶ But **zhuo zi (table)** 桌子
 - ▶ is not a compound because it is composed of a root morpheme plus a suffix

Derivations 派生词

- ▶ **Derivation** is also known as affixation, a process of creating new words by adding affixes to roots.
- ▶ In both Chinese and English, many words are formed by adding affixes to roots. Roots are actually content morphemes, carrying with them lexical meanings.
- ▶ Affixes could be either functional or semantic.

Derivations 派生词 - English Affixes 英语词缀

- ▶ Affixes in English mainly refer to the **prefixes and suffixes**, the process involving them are called prefixation and suffixation.
- ▶ Prefixes change the meaning of the root but normally not the part of speech.
- ▶ Examples:

Prefixes 英语前缀

- ▶ **fore-**: see>>foresee, tell>> foretell
- ▶ **intra**: mural>>intramural, personal>> intrapersonal, provincial>> intraprovincial
- ▶ **mis-**: lead>>mislead, arrange>>misarrange, deed>>misdeed, use>>misuse
- ▶ **mono-**: lingual>>monolingual, cycle>>monocycle, lateral>>monolateral
- ▶ **multi-**: lateral>>multilateral, media>>multimedia, national>>multinational
- ▶ **non-**: science>>non-science, smoker>> non-smoker, alcoholic>>non-alcoholic
- ▶ **post**: graduate>>postgraduate, war>>postwar
- ▶ **re-**: read>>reread, write>> rewrite, view>>review
- ▶ **semi-**: vowel>>semivowel, metal>>semi-metal
- ▶ **super-**:market>>supermarket, power>>superpower
- ▶ **tele-**: phone>>telephone, scope>>telescope, communication>>telecommunication
- ▶ **un-(in-,im-,il-,ir-)**:able>>unable, important>>unimportant, capable>>incapable,
- ▶ consistent>>inconsistent, moral>>immoral, mature>>immature, legal>>illegal, logical>>illogical, regular>>irregular, responsible>> irresponsible

Derivations 派生词 - English suffixes 英语后缀

- ▶ English suffixes change the part of speech and alter the meaning (usually grammatical meaning) of roots. Examples:
- ▶ **-ation(-tion,-sion,-ion)**: apply>>application, simplify>>simplification
- ▶ **-ance,-ence**: important>>importance, occur>>occurrence
- ▶ **-er(-or,-ess,-ist)**: teach>>teacher, act>>actor(actress), social>>socialist
- ▶ **-ment**: develop>>development, treat>>treatment, employ>>employment
- ▶ **-ness**: careless>>carelessness, ruthless>>ruthlessness

Derivations 派生词 - Chinese affixes 汉语词缀

- ▶ Compared to English, Chinese has few affixes. Mandarin is an isolated language. Prefixes and infixes are extremely rare in Mandarin, while suffixes are slightly more numerous.

Chinese Functional Affixes 汉语功能词缀

- ▶ In Chinese, functional affixes usually refer to nouns the affixes may phonetically help balance words in pronunciation, such as **-zi**子, **-men**们, or grammatically indicate a intimate relationships between the speakers such as **lao**-老, **da**-大, **a**-阿 , or the superlative degree such as **zui**-最, for example:
 - ▶ **a. prefix + root**
 - ▶ lao-老: lao hu (tiger), lao shu (mouse), lao shi (teacher), lao xiang (hometown fellow)
 - ▶ da-大: da jie(older sister), da ge (elder brother), da shen(aunt), da shu (uncle)
 - ▶ zui-: zui hao (at best), zui huai (at worst), zuibang (the best)
 - ▶ **b. root + suffix**
 - ▶ -zi子: fang zi (house), hai zi (child), yi zi (chair), zhuo zi (table)
 - ▶ -men们: wo men (we), ni men (you plural form), ta men (they), ren men (people)

Chinese Content Affixes 汉语实义词缀

- ▶ Content affixes also exist in Chinese as in English, they change the semantic meaning of words (Some semantic affixes in Chinese change both the meaning and parts of speech, therefore, these affixes in Chinese are called semi-affixes).
- ▶ **ci次- (next to/poor):** ci yao (less important), ci pin (poor quality product)
- ▶ **ya亚- (second to):** ya jun (silver medal winner), ya re dai (subtropical)
- ▶ **fei非- (not):** fei fa (illegal), fei jin shu (nonmetal)
- ▶ **fan反- (against):** fan zhan (anti-war), fan ge ming (counterrevolutionary)
- ▶ **shuang双- (double/two):** shuang bian (bilateral), shuang fang (both sides)
- ▶ **-yuan员 (member/person):** yan yuan (actor/actress), fu wu yuan (waiter/waitress)
- ▶ **-min民 (person/folk):** nong min (farmer), yu min (fisherman),
- ▶ **-xue学 (subject):** yu yan xue (linguistics), shu xue (mathematics)

Chinese Repetition of Words 中文词的重复

- ▶ **AA-style** (words show the intimate relationships to the nouns):
 - ▶ ye yeye 爷爷 (grandpa), nai nai 奶奶 (grandma), ge ge 哥哥 (elder brother), di di 弟弟 (younger brother), mei mei 妹妹 (younger sister), gou gou 狗狗 (dog)
- ▶ **ABAB-style** (informal use most in spoken Chinese):
 - ▶ tao lun tao lun (to have a discussion),
 - ▶ can guan can guan (to pay a visit),
 - ▶ duan lian duan lian (to take exercise)

English abbreviations

- ▶ Abbreviations are the combination of **initial letters** of a noun phrase but they are different mainly in formation and pronunciation.
- ▶ They can be spelled with either capital or lower-case letters, and they can be pronounced either by naming each individual letter (so called **initialisms**, as in USA, BBC), or by applying regular reading rules (e.g. NATO, OPEC). In the latter case the abbreviation is called an **acronym**.
- ▶ Apart from words composed of initial letters, abbreviations can also use incorporate non-initial letters:
- ▶ BSc>>Bachelor of Science,
- ▶ Inc>>Incorporated,
- ▶ Ltd. Limited,
- ▶ kHz>> kilohertz.

Acronym or initialism?

- ▶ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome - AIDS
- ▶ National Aeronautics and Space Administration - NASA
- ▶ Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries - OPEC
- ▶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO
- ▶ as soon as possible - a.s.a.p.
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ
- ▶ International Monetary Fund - IMF
- ▶ World Trade Organization - WTO

Chinese Abbreviations

- ▶ Word “simplification” or “word-clipping” could be a better term to denote abbreviation in Chinese.
- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ chao ji shi chang 超级市场>> chao shi (supermarket),
- ▶ cai se dian shi 彩色电视>> cai dian (colored TVset),
- ▶ huan jing bao hu 环境保护>> huan bao (environmental protection),
- ▶ Zhong guo jian she yin hang 中国建设银行>> jian hang (China Construction Bank)
- ▶ xia men da xue 厦门大学>> xia da (Xiamen University).

Loan words

- ▶ The process of borrowing “is one of the most frequent ways of acquiring new words, and speakers of all languages do it”.

English loans from the Chinese language

▶ **Phonetic translation**

- ▶ Bao zi, dui lian, jiao zi, kow-tow, ma jiang, feng shui, kung fu, wei qi, oolong, pu tong hua, qipao, shang hai, yin, yang, yuan.

▶ **Semantic translation**

- ▶ bean curd, Buddhism, chopsticks, panda, phoenix, gold fish, incense, fireworks, monk, acupuncture, Beijing Opera, Confucius, Confucianism.

▶ **English has Chinese Characteristics**

- ▶ Opening Up policy, family planning, win-win policy, three representatives, vegetable basket project

Chinese words borrowed from English

▶ **Phonetic translation**

- ▶ Ka fei(coffee), sha fa(sofa),gao'erfu(golf), ba lei(ballet) , bang(pound), sa ke si (saxophone), ba si (bus), ji ta (guitar wei ta ming(Vitamin), pi jiu(beer), ka pian(card), jiu ba(bar), tuo kou xiu(talk show), gao'er fu qiu(golf), bing qi ling (iceream), wu tuo bang (Utopia).

▶ **Semantic translation**

- ▶ lan qiu (basketball), fei zao ju (soap opera), da xiao tiao (the Great Depression), hong shi zi (Red Cross), dian shi (television), shi bao (times), ji guang (laser), jiao xiang yue (symphony), gong hui (trade union), mian bao (bread), zhi shang (IQ), ji du tu (Christian)

▶ **Direct borrow:**

- ▶ BBC, DVD, MP3, WTO, APEC, UFO, MBA, NBA, PC

Conversion

- ▶ The process of conversion focuses solely on changing the word class of the particular word.
- ▶ If you have noticed, you would have seen how some nouns are used to perform the role of a verb or an adjective acting like a noun just by the addition of another word or slightly altering the spelling of the actual word.
- ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ There will definitely be a lot of **ups and downs** in life.
 - ▶ The **rich** should help the **poor**.