

Description and analysis of English Morphosyntax

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Class 07 – Lexical constructions (2)



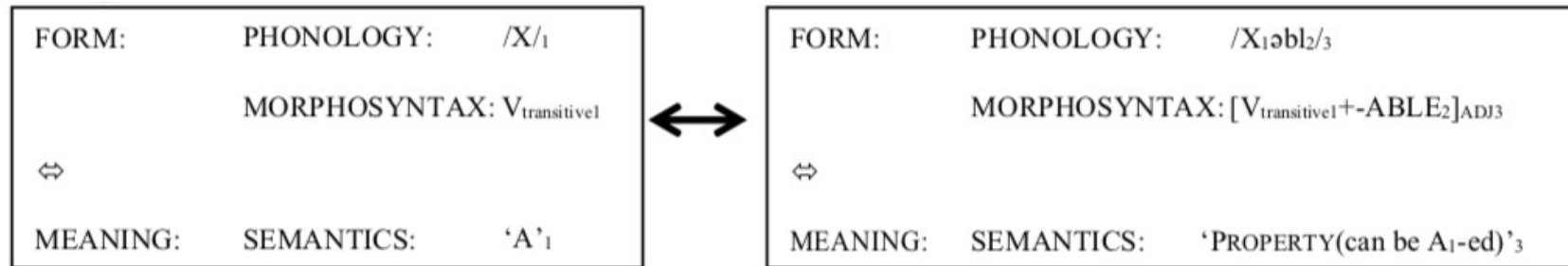
Outline

- Derivational morphology
- Other morphological processes

Derivational morphology

- The dichotomous approach to morphological structures will divide *inflectional morphology* (said to deal with the grammatical properties of verbs, nouns and adjectives in English) and *derivational morphology* (said to be used in the process of word creation);
- Another term commonly used to refer to derivational morphology is *word-formation*, which is divided into three processes:
 - a) Derivation;
 - b) Compounding;
 - c) Conversion;
- In classical morphological theory, derivation is defined as the combination of a **free morpheme** and a **bound** one (eg. **likely**);
- The constructional approach, a word-based morphological theory will, instead, state that bound morphemes are in fact the substantive part of a partially schematic construction.
- The –able construction is responsible for licensing the following constructs *acceptable*, *affordable*, *comparable*, etc.
- Therefore, knowing the grammar of a bound morpheme means knowing the construction of which it serves as a substantive part.

Derivational morphology



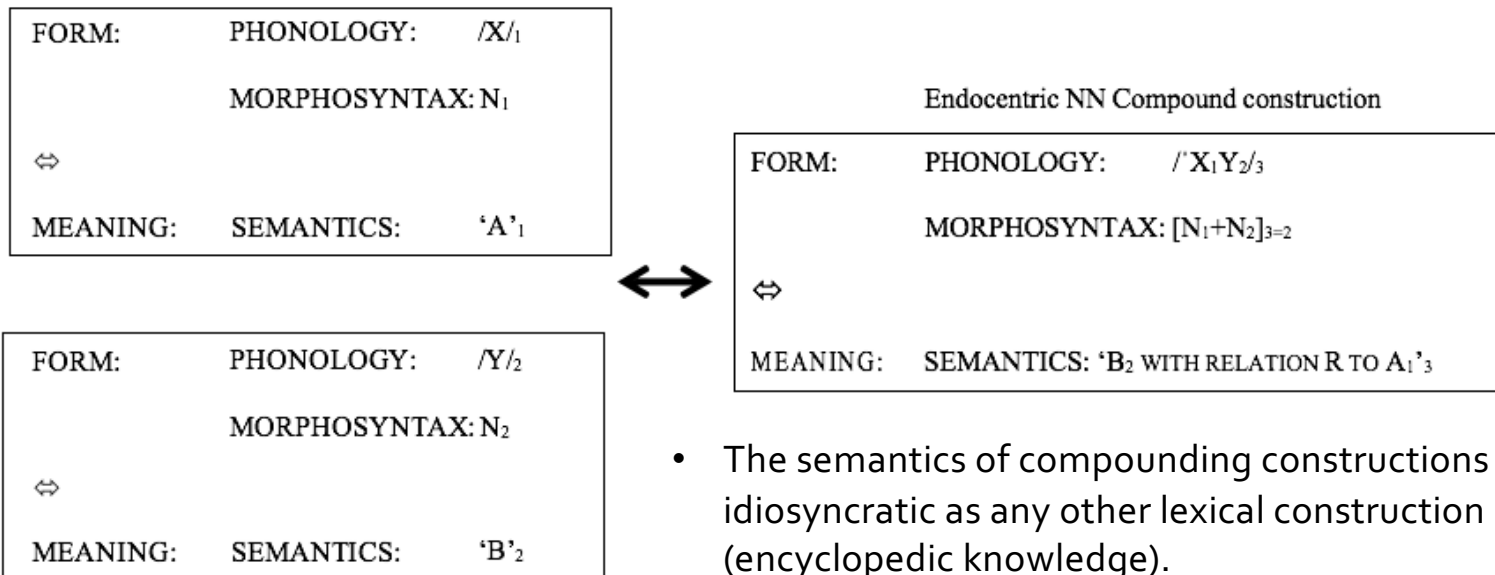
- In constructional terms, the **-able construction** will resort to a general transitive V construction and will specify **-able** as the substantive part of the constructional schema [V_{transitive} + -ABLE]_{ADJ};
- The knowledge of this template will make the following constructs possible despite their general low frequency:
 - a) About 40% of the potentially **farmable** sea water identified by the White Fish Authority in the whole of the United Kingdom is in the Western Isles. (BNC: ALg:W_misc)
 - b) So this is as big as we could get without it falling apart, so it's a nice **handleable** book, though a little heavy. (BNC: KRT:S_Brdcast_news)
 - c) Glows through the **crackable** walls of the once big room (BNC: JoX:W_fict_poetry)
- The constructs above are certainly not stored tokens in speakers' constructions, but they are evidence of constructional schematic knowledge.

Compounding constructions

- The next word-formation process, the most frequent one (Bauer, 2009), is compounding. In this process, two free word constructions are put together to form a new word. Eg:

armchair / daylight / steamboat / tablecloth;

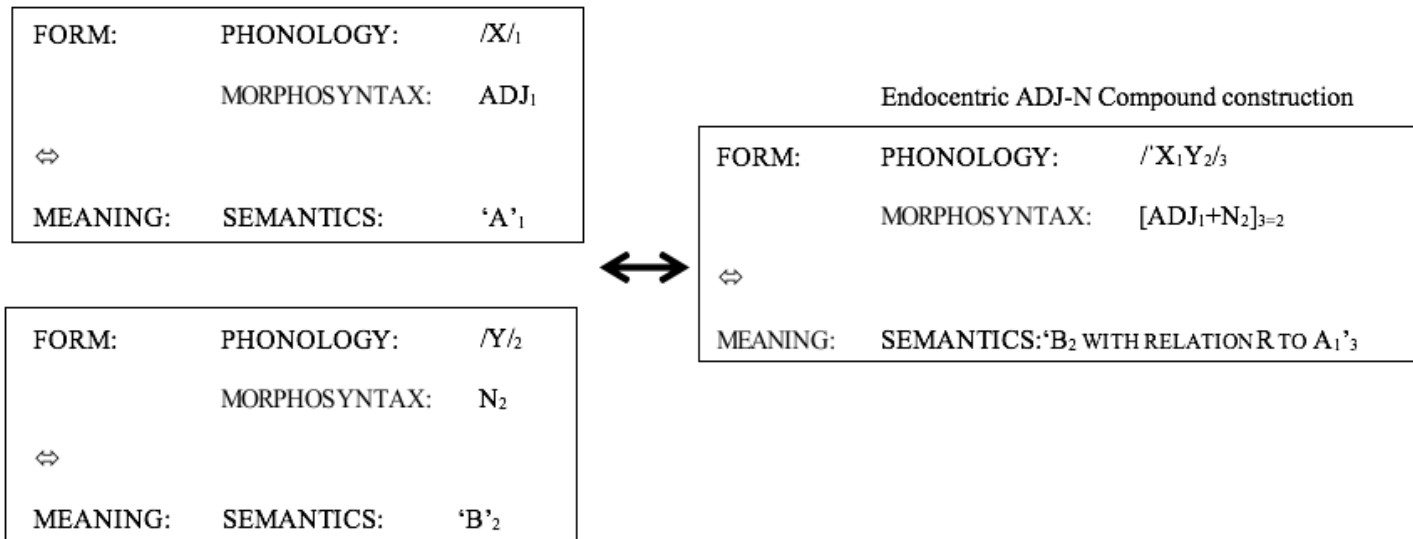
- In compounding constructions, the first construction serves as a modifier and the second is the head (eg. *armchair* is a type of *chair*, not of *arm*). These are called *endocentric compounds*.



- The semantics of compounding constructions will be as idiosyncratic as any other lexical construction (encyclopedic knowledge).

Compounding constructions

- The cases of endocentric ADJ-N compounds serve the purpose to show that the second N in the construction will determine not only the semantics of the entire construction (*blackberry* is a type of *berry*), but will also determine its syntactic class (blackberry is a noun);
- Compounding constructions vs. phrasal constructions: *blackbird* / *black bird*; *Whitehouse* / *white house*; *greenhouse* / *green house*, etc.



Compounding constructions

- What about cases such as: *redneck, loudmouth, greybeard*?
- *Redneck* is not a type of neck, but rather a person. These kinds of compounding constructions signal to something else via metonymic processes. These are exocentric constructions;

FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/X/ ₁
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	ADJ ₁
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'A' ₁

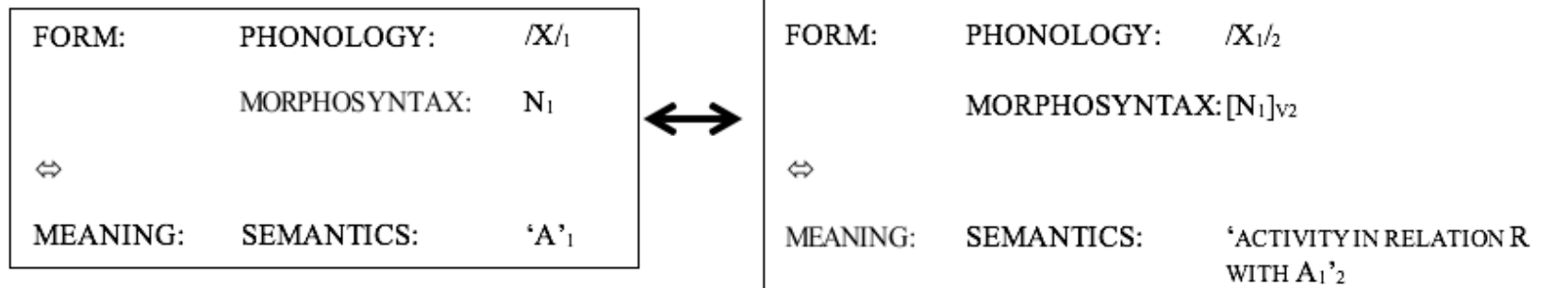
FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/Y/ ₂
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	N ₂
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'B' ₂



Exocentric ADJN Compound construction		
FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/'X ₁ Y ₂ / ₃
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	[ADJ ₁ +N ₂] ₃₌₂
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'an ENTITY that has B ₂ WITH RELATION R TO A ₁ ' ₃

Conversion constructions

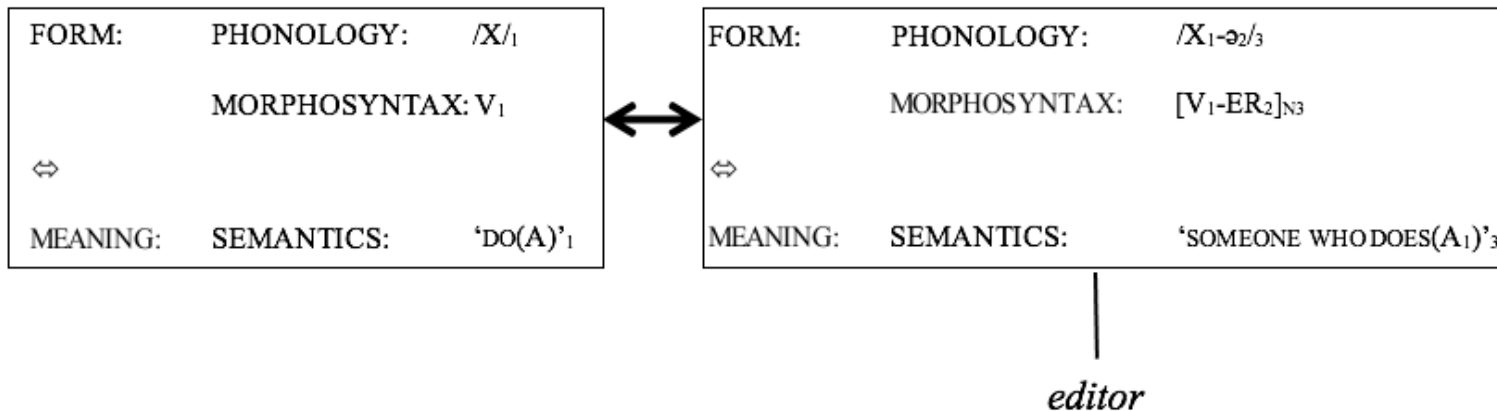
- The third, quite productive word-formation pattern is that of conversion (=change of word class) without any word class modification: a bottle > to bottle someone / a bridge > to bridge the gap;



Processes of shortening

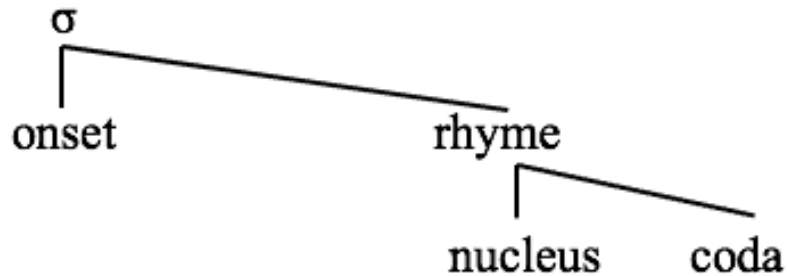
- *Conversion, derivation and compounding* are the most frequent constructions in English, but some others are also rather productive: the shortening processes;
 - (i) clipping: advertisement → add / photography → photo
 - (ii) backformation: editor → edit / typewriter → to typewrite
 - (iii) blending: breakfast + lunch → brunch / angry + hungry → hangry
- The processes above do not seem to involve morpheme deletion.

V-to-N Action Noun construction



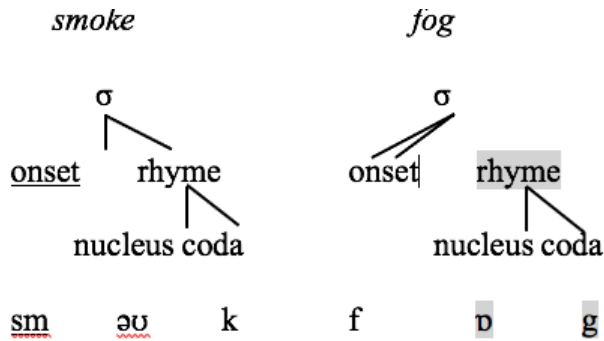
Clippings and blends

- These two processes involve the omission of non-meaningful parts;
- Although no systematic omission is operated, the output always complies with the English phonotactics (no word starts with [kn-] sequence in English);
- These phenomena are considered to be partially prosodic; therefore, they also go by the name of prosodic morphological processes (Plag, 2003);
- In order to understand this, we must look at the basic unit of prosody: the syllable (σ).



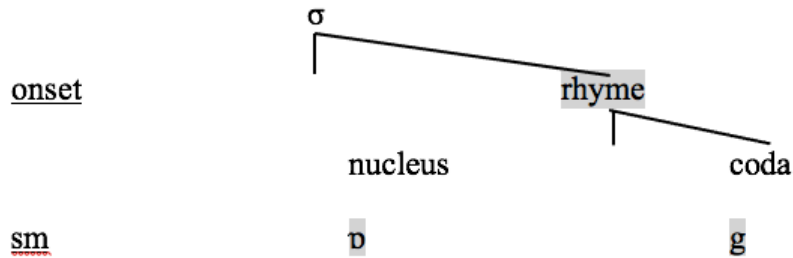
Clippings and blends

- What happens in blending is the blending of two syllable parts;



- Plag (2003): WX + YZ → WZ;

Syllable structure of *smog*



Blends

FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/W X/ ₁
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	N ₁
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'A' ₁

FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/Y Z/ ₂
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	N ₂
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'B' ₂



NN Blend construction		
FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/'W ₁ Z ₂ / ₃
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	N ₃
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'ENTITY THAT HAS PROPERTIES OF A ₁ & B ₂ ' ₃

Clippings

FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/W X/ ₁
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	N ₁
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'A' ₁



N Clipping construction

FORM:	PHONOLOGY:	/'W ₁ / ₂
	MORPHOSYNTAX:	N ₂
⇔		
MEANING:	SEMANTICS:	'A ₁ (=familiar)' ₂
	PRAGMATICS:	informal

Alphabetism and acronym constructions

- Alphabetisms

Central Intelligence Agency → CIA

Oxford English Dictionary → OED

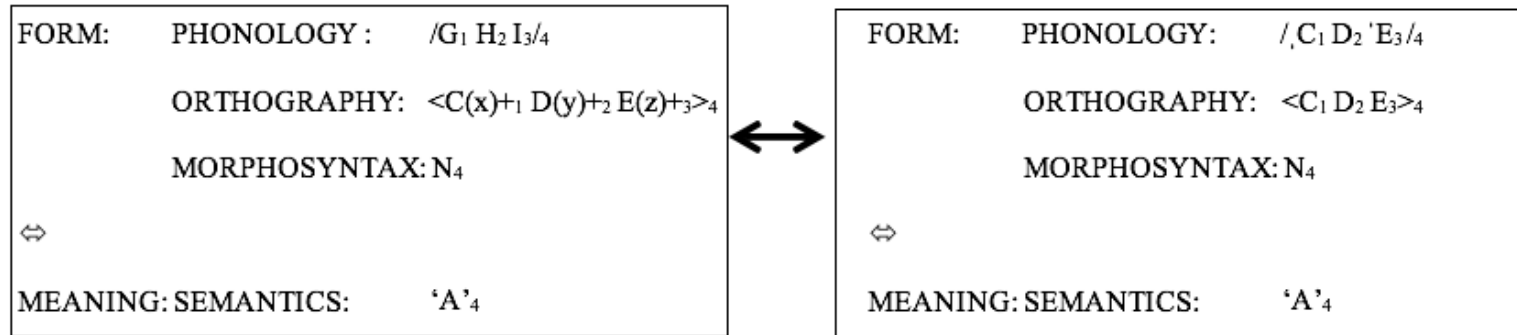
United States of America → USA

- Acronyms

Oil Producing and Exporting Countries → OPEC

Lightwave Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation → laser

radio detecting and ranging → radar



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