

Where are words come from
2

Change of meaning

How do we know past pronunciation?

Answer to a query at end of last session

Roman alphabet was used with the letters having the same values as in Latin		
<i>æ</i> 'coined' to represent the sound of the vowel in glæd 'glad', ræt 'rat'		
Norman French spelling	c	cild → child , cyning → king , caru → care , cnif → knif
	u	hus → hous
	f	finger → finger , of → of , off , ofer → ouer , over
Occasional spelling	a	Thank spelt thenk , satisfy spelt settisfie
Rhyme	a	Chaucer rhymes swallow and holowe

Building up the vocabulary

Extend the range of meaning of words	device (Session 2)
Form compounds or add affixes	blackboard, pre-school, earthling (Session 3)
Borrow words	pizza (Session 4)
No word is completely new. It is always a new combination of existing parts or a new use of old material	
<i>Quark</i> Apparently an arbitrary formation, coined by Murray Gell-Mann (b. 1929), U.S. physicist	
Suffixes (all?) start life as words.	
Kingdom, dōm	judgement, authority, doom, dominion
Childhood, hād	condition, state, manner, form
cwic	quick (and the dead), living
cwiclic	'living'
cwiclice	'vigorously, quickly'
lic	'body'

How many words?

Local languages	20, 000 but everyone knows them all
English	5000,000 in OED and Webster's 3rd
	Researchers at Harvard University and Google found that the language was expanding by 8,500 words a year in the new millennium and now stands at 1,022,000 words. But nearly half of the new words are either slang or invented jargon.
	slang
	Technical: <i>Mosby's Dictionary of medicine, nursing and health professions</i> 44,000
Educated people	Familiar with 40,000, use 20,000 ?
	Greek and Latin used for fauna, flora and chemical compounds
	Giant Panda is <i>Ailuropoda melanoleuca</i> , literally, cat-foot black-white
	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
	<i>Berberis Darwinii</i>

Words for what?

In the first book of the Bible we find the following, *'And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof'* (Genesis 2:19).

grandfather

mother's father

father's father

we

we(2), we (>2)

we (inc. you), we (exc. you)

spectrum

violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red

big cats

stripes

tigers

spots

leopards, cheetahs

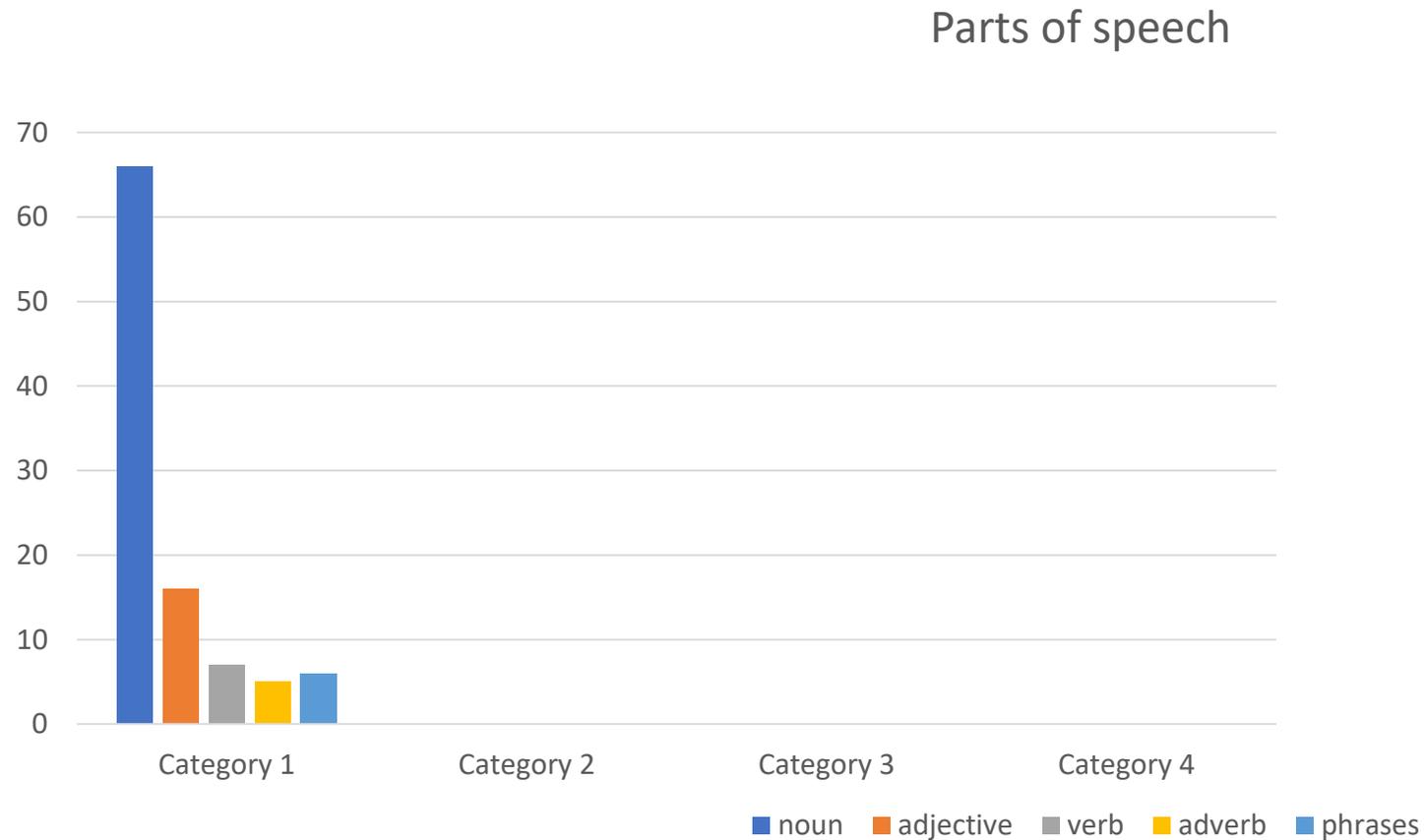
neither

lions, jaguars, pumas

cultural artefacts

baby boomers, x generation, millennials, z generation

Make-up of vocabulary: parts of speech



Phrases

	all and sundry, better late than never, as old as the hills, sick and tired, without a care in the world, go from bad to worse
Siamese twins	do or die, wear and tear, mix and match, part and parcel, might and main
fairy stories	once upon a time, lived happily ever after
proverbs	all's well that ends well, what goes around comes around
interactive	Cat got your tongue? wrong side of the bed
narrative	in the nick of time, sickening thud, to the bitter end
catchphrases	Show me the money. Don't mention the war.
business	think outside of the box, at the end of the day, run it past someone, push the envelope, to be kept in the loop, let's touch base, on my radar, ping me

Metaphor

	earlier	later
	All the world's a stage And all the men and women merely players AYLI II, vii	
mouse	animal	device to control insertion point
to surf	physical	browsing the Web
troll	Norse mythical demon	social media abuser
Trojan (horse)	legendary wooden horse	uninvited malicious program

Metonymy

crown	royal headdress	monarch, monarchy
White House	home of POTUS	US government
glass	substance	drinking vessel
suit	clothing	executive (male?)
rubber	something that rubs	substance used for rubbing
stand	stand on feet	grandstand, busker's stand
tongue	organ	language

Concrete to abstract

Metaphor is much more extensive than metonymy and is fundamental in language. Humans do not create words for abstract notions out of nothing, they extend the range of words with concrete reference. Consider the following ways of expressing the notion of understanding something that has been said,

-
- *I couldn't **grasp** what he meant exactly.*
- *I didn't **get** what she said.*
- *I **gathered** from what he said that he was in favour of raising interest rates.*
- *I couldn't **take in** what she was saying.*
- *I didn't **catch** what you said.*
- *Did you **pick up on** the insinuation?*

Application to a new domain

	earlier	later
device	mechanical contrivance	smart phone, tablet, etc.
chat	converse	converse online
journey	trip, voyage	career <i>Looking back I must say it's been an enjoyable journey.</i> inc. sport <i>Mum's been with me for the whole journey.</i> The series of steps needed to complete a task <i>This site will guide you through the application journey.</i>
icon	image, natural history, religious	Symbol on computer screen Something famous that can stand as a symbol: Eiffel Tower Someone very famous: Roger Federer Someone/some event prominent in sport, movies, etc.
spam	canned meat	unsolicited widespread messaging

Verb plus preposition

	come	go	get	take
off	The move came off. Come off it.	Bomb went off	The crim got off.	He took off. He took off the prize.
to	The patient came to.	The estate went to Hilary.	They got to Esk.	She took to swimming.
into	Come into money	Go into the details	Get into darts Get into shorts	Take into account.
on	The plants are coming on.	He went on a bit.	She got on.	She took on extra duties.
in	Come in second. Where do I come in?	Go in a sweep	Get into shares	Take in washing

Updating the referent

pen	quill	Nib pen, fountain pen, ballpoint pen, light pen
girlfriend/boyfriend	holding hands	intimate
millionaire	very rich person	anyone who owns a property in the city

Reinterpretation/Misinterpretation

alibi	Judge said, 'Son, what is your alibi, If you were somewhere else, you won't have to die.'
	Be my alibi. Alibi me. He didn't do it. He's got an alibi. (misinterpreted) Don't offer alibis for losing (1922)
transpire	Not allowing the fact of there being any difficulty ...to transpire to Donna Bianca (1905)
	What had transpired during his absence he did not know. (misinterpreted)
	His account of what transpired was so utterly unlike what I expected (1883).
literally	Those passages are not to be understood literally.
	He must have fallen literally at her feet and lain there gasping. (1963)
	'OMG, I literally died when I found out!' 'No, you figuratively died.' (2008)

Frequency

youth(s)	young	<i>The country's youth are up in arms over the proposal to raise the age limit for drinking alcohol.</i>
	young undesirable male	<i>Four youths are suspected of starting the fire.</i>
attitude	physical	<i>they walk in stiff, constrained, and angular attitudes (1881)</i>
	mental	<i>The attitude of ordinary people...towards mathematics...may be summed up as the same as their attitude to the police force.</i>
	negative	<i>'having an attitude problem' or 'giving attitude'.</i>
	positive	<i>You got to go at the business with an attitude or you get nowhere (1988).</i>

Point of view of city/elite

peasant, boor, villein, churl, rustic	peasant, boor, boorish, villain, churlish
provincial	'having or suggestive of the outlook, tastes, character, etc., associated with or attributed to inhabitants of a province or the provinces; <i>esp. (depreciative)</i> parochial or narrow-minded; lacking in education, culture, or sophistication' (OED).
urbane, civil	
suburbia, suburban	'having or expressing the narrowness of view or lack of sophistication often attributed to residents of the suburbs' (OED).
common (people)	common woman. Her speech was very common. (1866)
vulgar, vulgar fractions	His manner was vulgar. 'Arse' is a vulgar word.

Point of view

artificial

Earlier meaning:	It meant elaborate, formed with skill, Latin <i>ars</i> , <i>art-is</i> 'skill'	
<p>'The languages of the native appears to be more artificial than might be expressed from a people sunk so low in civilization. It abounds with inflections. Thus the persons and cases of nouns are expressed by terminal inflections, formed by the combination of the pronouns with the principal word.' (1854)</p>		
Later meaning	Man-made, synthetic	artificial limb
	contrived	Frivolous and artificial, artificial prices, artificial smile
	Opposed to natural and hence considered inferior	Artificial flowers, artificial flavour

Weakening

terrible	a monstre fulle terrible (1490)	a terrible flirt (1879)
awful	The other [scene] was awful, and full of Terror (1722)	It tasted awful (2016)
awesome	His awesome ire (1578) Awesome power of nature (2015)	Hike in pay to an awesome 64% (1975) Like he's totally hot, you know, totally awesome (1982)
dreadful	The blessed and dredeful visage of our Lord Jesu in his most fereful and last dome.	We waited a dreadful time (1897)

Phrase abbreviation

wireless	wireless telegraphy/telephony
daily	daily newspaper
remote	remote control
using	using drugs
pub	public house

Fashion

sympathy	largely replaced by	empathy
problem	“	issue
affect	“	impact
<i>She wanted to see how the improvements impacted their level of satisfaction.</i>		
discussion	“	conversation
unreal	“	surreal

Euphemism

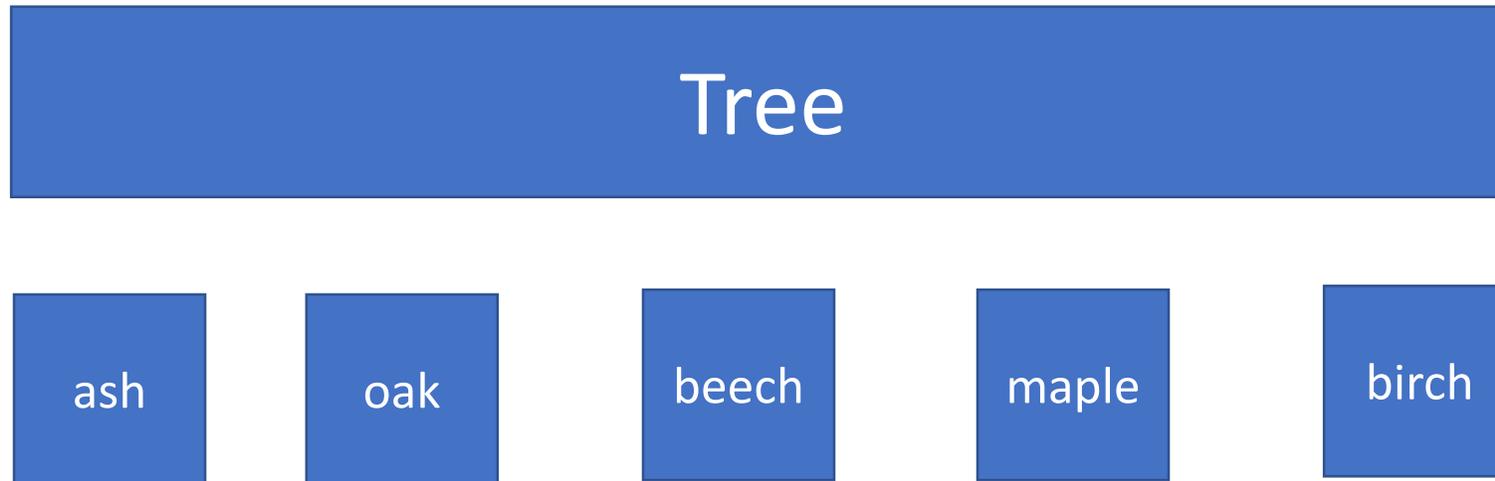
death	die, dead, dead person	pass away, meet his/her maker, etc., at rest, the departed
	kill	take out, neutralize, execute
body	urinate, defecate	pass water, do one's business, powder one's nose
	loo	lavatory, toilet, bathroom (US), gents'
	have intercourse with	sleep with
	pregnant	in the family way, with child, expecting

Relics

seek, look for, search	Hide and seek Let's play hide and seek. I'll hide and you look for me. Not far to seek, sought to destroy me, much sought-after
throw, cast	Cast a line, net, cast a vote, cast aspersions; castaway
stomach, belly	Belly button
	Belly landing, Belly ache Belly laugh Belly dancing Bali belly
kilometres	miles better
cents	have a bob each way

Hypernyms & hyponyms

- Ash, oak etc. are hyponyms of tree and tree is a hypernym (cover term) of ash, oak, etc.



Where a hyponym is used as a hypernym

humans	men	women
ducks	drake	duck
peafowl	peacock	peahen
geese	gander	goose
cattle	bull	cow

Synonyms

- Begin, start, commence
- Buy, purchase
- Hackneyed, trite
- Naked, nude (as adjectives)
- The Devil, Satan
- Appear (to be), seem (to be)
- Hard and difficult (in some contexts, e.g. task, problem)
- Typhlitis, caecitis (inflammation of the caecum)
- Valium, diazepam

Synonyms can differ in formality, dialect, etc

formal/informal	steal	pinch
dialect	boot (of car)	trunk (of car)
	girl	lass
	child	bairn
euphemism	die	pass away
plain/fancy	slim	svelte
appreciative/pejorative	slim	skinny

Where synonyms abound

alleged mental deficiency	<i>crazy, cretin, dense, dim, dope, dull, dullard, dumb, dunce, idiot, ignoramus, imbecile, lunatic, mad, moron, simple, simpleton, slow, stupid, thick</i>
tell	<i>acquaint somebody with, advise, announce, announce, apprise somebody of, assert, aver, convey, declare, disclose, enlighten, express, fill somebody in, give someone to understand, impart, indicate, inform, instruct, intimate, let it be known that, let someone know, let out, notify, proclaim, pronounce, relate, remark, report, reveal, say, speak, state, suggest, talk, tell, utter</i>
drunkenness	<i>blotto, sozzled, wasted, plastered, loaded, sloshed</i>
sex	<i>terms for breasts, penis, vagina, intercourse, female 'intercourser'</i>

Antonyms

gradable	big/small, hot/cold
contradictory	alive/dead, odd/even
Forming antonyms	to lock/unlock, to bind/unbind
	arrival/non-arrival, non-refundable
	event/non-event
No positive counterpart	uncouth, ungainly

Homophones and homographs

Homophones (sound the same)	bear/bare, you/ewe/yew
Homographs (written the same)	You can lead a horse to water, but a pencil must be lead.
Homophone and homograph	bear (carry) and bear (animal)

Some use the term **homonym** for homophones or homographs, others reserve **homonym** for cases like *bear*, where words are alike in both sound and spelling.

Conflict of homonyms (sc. Homophones)

Let 'prevent'	Hamlet: <i>By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.</i>
Let 'allow'	<i>She let him go.</i>
	The 'prevent' sense lives on only in ' <i>let (ball) and 'without let or hindrance'</i>
Cleave 'adhere'	'Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy' (Psalm 137).
Cleave 'cut'	<i>To cleave a heart in twaine.</i> Measure for Measure III, i
	The 'adhere' sense has been lost. The 'cut' sense lives on. Compare also <i>cloven, cleaver, cleft palate, cleft chin</i>

Conflicts that remain

hot	high temperature	spicy
funny	odd	humorous
pepper	spice	capsicum

Ada: *How old is Bruce?*

Elsie: *He's forty.*

Ada: *And how old is Gwen?*

Elsie: *She's forty too.*

Ada: *So Gwen is older than Bruce?*

Elsie: *No, they're both forty.*

Contranyms/contronyms

sanction 'allow'	<i>These statements are sanctioned by common sense (1836).</i>
sanction 'disallow'	<i>'Mr Ryan has been implicated..., but has never been charged by police or sanctioned by racing authorities.'</i>
<i>In a recent news report a bank employee 'was hardly sanctioned' for alleged misconduct, and in the next report golfers were looking forward to play in a 'fully sanctioned version' of a new tournament. Australian ABC TV News, 19/4/2018.</i>	
oversight	If I want to import drugs, I hope to escape the <i>oversight</i> of Customs, i.e., supervision or inspection. I might be lucky and get them past Customs through an <i>oversight</i> on their part, i.e., a careless failure to inspect.

Retronyms

<i>original name</i>	<i>new invention</i>	<i>retronym</i>
book	paperback (book)	hardback (book)
clock, watch	digital clock, watch	analogue clock, watch
guitar	electric guitar	acoustic guitar
mail	e-mail	snail mail
milk	skinny milk	whole milk
movie, film	talkie	silent movie, silent film
razor	safety razor	cut-throat razor, straight razor
record	LP	78s
LP	CD (1982)	vinyls
telephone	mobile phone, cell phone	landline