

Veranstalter:	Florian Dolberg
Thema:	Word Formation [AA-A1, ENG-4/a, ENG-5, AA-V1b, AA-V2b, AA-W, AA-M1]
Art der Veranstaltung:	Seminar Ib
Veranstaltungsnummer:	53-510
Zeit:	2st., Mi 16-18
Raum:	Phil 1269
Beginn:	4. April 2012

Course description:



One conspicuous aspect of English is that it has rather a lot of words. But asking experts such as linguists or lexicographers about how many there are exactly generally causes some hemming and hawing: this is mainly because it is not at all easy to decide what a word is: dog certainly is, but is dogs another or the same word? What about dog-tired or hot dog? Are these one or two words? A quick-and-dirty way (How many words are that? and why?) to get an estimate is to count entries in standard dictionaries: the OED lists 600,000 entries, but includes 'dead' words that are not used anymore; Merriam-Webster's Unabridged contains about 470,000 entries. A rather larger (and quite fiercely contested) number obtains from www.languagemonitor.com, who, on the basis of a joint project by Harvard University and Google, claim that English possessed 1,010,649.7 different words on January 1st, 2012, with an average of 14.7 words being added every day. Regardless of how accurate these figures are, it is apparent that the English vocabulary is rich.

Hence, in this course we study words: to begin with, we compare definitions of the word word and the criteria employed to arrive at these definitions. From this basis, we zoom in on the linguistic unit word to learn about its parts (morphemes) and how we combine them (inflectional and word formation processes). We discuss in detail the most frequent of the latter, compounding (e.g. wallpaper) and derivation (e.g. wait-er, word-less, un-wise), as well as a third process of word formation that English really likes, conversion, illustrated in the cartoon above.

In addition to these three, there are a number of so-called minor word formation processes, which we will also look at. These are no less interesting, having given us words like fridge, brunch, crow, asap, or Kleenex. Having learned about how words are made, we finish off with some more overarching inquiries, such as how come some affixes and word formation processes generate more words than others (productivity) or how words are stored in the mind (lexicalisation).

Credit requirements: (6 credit points, 3 credit points without term paper)

- regular, active participation in class and on agora
- completion of reading assignments and reading responses on time
- design, production and performance of a poster presentation
- conducting an empirical study on word formation in the form of a term paper

Basic reading:

Bauer, Laurie. 1983. *English word-formation*. Cambridge: CUP.

Plag, Ingo. 2003. *Word-formation in English*. Cambridge: CUP.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2005. *Englische Morphologie und Wortbildung: eine Einführung*. Berlin: Schmidt.

Sprechstunden:

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