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*English and **General** Historical **Lexicology***

*Materials for **Onomasiology Seminars***

*[**Onomasiology Online Monographs** vol. 1]*

Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany, July 2007

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Abbreviations

AmE	American English
BrE	British English
colloq.	colloquial
dial.	dialect(al)
Du.	Dutch
E.	English
EModE.	Early Modern English (1500-1750)
Fr.	French
G.	German
Gmc.	Germanic
IE.	Indo-European
It.	Italian
ME.	Middle English (1100-1500)
ModE.	Modern English (1750-)
OE.	Old English (450-1100)
Sp.	Spanish
Swed.	Swedish

Fonts:

- Small caps are used for (extralinguistic) concepts, e.g.:
We are looking for a word to denote SETTING WORDS IN ITALICS.
- Italics for object language (linguistic forms, designations), e.g.:
The term we use for this phenomenon is *italicization*.
- Single inverted commas are used for meaning, e.g.:
The word *italicization* means ‘1. setting words in italics; 2. having set words in italics’.
- Double inverted commas are used for quotes or unconventional word use.

Preface: Goals and Ideas of the Book

Why deal with onomasiology, the study of designations? First of all, there seems to be a wide-spread interest in the history of words and phrases, designations, designation changes, lexical similarities between languages and lexical differences between dialects. Besides, in every speech community there is the phenomenon of linguistic criticism. This often includes discussions on the benefit and danger of foreign terms. Being familiar with the ways how designations are coined, how they change their sound-shape, how they are replaced and why they are replaced can therefore indeed render service to a number of concerns of the layperson.

The overall idea of the 7 chapters of this book is to present just a core knowledge in historical lexicology and onomasiology. This core knowledge, though, is meant to prepare students for carrying out further onomasiological research on topics they are interested in themselves (learner autonomy!). The sessions covering the core knowledge as well as the sessions for further projects also serve to give students chances to train various key competences, or “soft skills”, relevant in a knowledge society, e.g. self-competences (such as discipline), social competences (such as showing empathy, distributing tasks in a just way), methodological competences (such as asking a useful question, acquiring information, evaluating information, setting up a research design, presenting information, “translating” technical language into everyday language). The overall goals of the book thus agree with the demands of an information and knowledge society. The didactic model that we suggest for the acquisition of the core knowledge is the model *LdL* (= G. *Lernen durch Lehren* = *Learning by Teaching*) (cf. Grzega 2005a). The fundamental principle of *LdL* is to hand over as much teaching responsibility to the learner as possible and to encourage as many students as possible to engage in the highest possible degree of activity. Thus the responsibility for organizing a session may be handed over to a different team of students every week. The team of students in charge of the lesson must then think of appropriate teaching methods to convey their topic (i.e. chalk and talk, ex-cathedra teaching, working in pairs, group work, discussion, etc.); the majority of the tasks should activate the fellow learners. The role of the teacher consists in preparing, supporting before and during sessions (concerning both the topic and the atmosphere or emotions of the participants). In this model

communication is seen as highly important

- (1) to make sure that everyone has understood what people are talking about,
- (2) to make sure that everyone can see sense (or relevance or use) in what people are talking about,
- (3) to give everyone the opportunity to share their knowledge with others and thus help accelerate and consolidate the learning process,
- (4) to give everyone the opportunity to raise comments on the way the seminar proceeds and the way the topics are presented and to make suggestions on how to improve the process that the seminar can be enjoyable and profitable for everyone.

The core knowledge gathered here is based on the encompassing work by Grzegorz (2004b). This knowledge can be generated in 10 sessions, if students have attended an introductory course to linguistics. Here is a suggestion for distributing the 7 chapters as session preparations at home:

- Session 1: I
- Session 2: II
- Session 3: III.1
- Session 4: III.1 (continued) + III.2
- Session 5: IV.1+2
- Session 6: IV.3
- Session 7: IV.4
- Session 8: IV.5+6
- Session 9: V
- Session 10: VI + VII

In a session, those responsible for leading the session may want to check whether the information given was understood and could provide further information. Each chapter includes examples from English. Each chapter includes suggestions for tasks; in some of the tasks students are also encouraged to include other languages beside English. These tasks could be given as homework. Solutions should be discussed in class (a master solution is therefore not given here). The tasks can be done in teams or individually. It might make sense to have students exchange and give arguments for their ideas in team-work first and the exchange ideas in a plenary session.

At the end of each chapter readers will find further reading recommendations.

At the end of these 10 sessions and 7 chapters, students should be able to differentiate between processes and forces of lexical change, word and concept, onomasiology and semasiology, description and evaluation, and they should be able to carry out onomasiological research themselves.

We wish all teachers and students enjoyable and profitable sessions with these materials.

Joachim Grzegorz

Marion Schöner

I. A First Introduction: Definition, History, Instruments

1. Definition

The first step in every scientific work is always to define the field you are working in, the question you like to answer, or the hypothesis you like to test and the notions you use so that everyone knows what you are talking about. So what are lexicology and onomasiology about? **Lexicology is the study of words**, and onomasiology is a branch of it. **The goal in onomasiology is to find the linguistic forms, or the words, that can stand for a given concept/idea/object.** Like many words denoting sciences, the word *onomasiology* is derived from two ancient Greek words – *ónoma*, which means ‘name’, and *logos*, which can be translated as ‘science’ or ‘study of’. *Onomasiology* could thus be rendered as “the study of designations”. However, some also speak of onomasiology when they are looking for grammatical forms that can stand for a given function, e.g. “How can I express future time?”, and when they are looking for conversational patterns that can be used in a given communicative task, e.g. “How can I greet somebody?” In any case, you always depart from an idea and look for adequate expressions. As its title suggests, this book will primarily deal with words. In addition, the focus is on historical lexicology and historical onomasiology, in other words: the development of designations.

Onomasiology is closely connected to semasiology. Both these branches of linguistics deal with the relationships between words, reproduction, and reality. Therefore it is helpful to interlink both disciplines. While onomasiology starts from concepts, semasiology starts from forms and asks for their meanings. Semasiology (derived from the ancient Greek words *semasia*, which means ‘to signify or name’ and, again, *logos*, for ‘science’) is concerned with meaning and the change of meaning. A typical semasiological question is: “Which meanings does this word have?”, for instance, “Which meanings does the word *glass* have?”. A semasiological perspective is more the perspective of a listener who is looking for the meaning of a word s/he has heard. And as speaking and listening go hand in hand in conversation, onomasiology and semasiology must go hand in hand in research about the changing relation between

words and concepts. We could say that onomasiology and semasiology approach the same problem from different sides.

2. History

Onomasiology was already initiated in the late 19th century, but it didn't receive its name until 1902, when the Austrian linguist Adolf Zauner published his study on body-part terminology in Romance languages (1902). And it is in Romance linguistics that the most important early onomasiological works were written. Early linguists were basically interested in the etymology (i.e. the word-history) of the various expressions for a concept, which was mostly a clearly defined, unchangeable concrete object or action. Later the Austrian linguists Rudolf Meringer and Hugo Schuchardt started the "Wörter und Sachen" movement ("words-and-things" movement), which emphasized that every study of a word needed to include the study of the object it denotes. It was also Schuchardt who underlined that the etymologist-onomasiologist, when tracing back the history of a word, needs to respect both the "dame phonétique" (i.e. to prove the regularity of sound changes or explain irregularities) and the "dame sémantique" (i.e. to justify semantic changes by looking for parallel developments). Another branch that developed from onomasiology and at the same time enriched it was linguistic geography, or areal linguistics,—it provided onomasiologists with valuable linguistic atlases. The first ones are the ALF (*Atlas Linguistique de la France*) by Jules Gilliéron (1902-20), the AIS (*Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz*) by Karl Jaberg and Jakob Jud (1928-1940), and the DSA (*Deutscher Sprachatlas*) by Ferdinand Wrede et al. (1927-1956). These atlases include maps that show the corresponding name(s) for a concept in different regions as they were gathered in interviews with dialect speakers (mostly old rural males) by means of a questionnaire. Concerning English linguistics, onomasiology as well as linguistic geography has been playing only a minor role (the first linguistic atlas for the US was initiated by Hans Kurath (1949), the first one for the UK by Eugen Dieth, viz. the SED). In 1931, the German linguist Jost Trier introduced a new method in his book *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes* which is known as the word-field theory. According to Trier, lexical changes must always be seen, apart from the traditional aspects, in connection with the changes within a given word-field. After World War II only few studies on onomasiological theory have been carried out (e.g. the works by Cecil H. Brown, Stanley R. Witkowski, Brent Berlin, listed in the bibliography). Since the late 1990's onomasiology has seen new light with the works by Dirk Geeraerts, Andreas Blank, Peter Koch, Joachim Grzega (see

their works listed in the bibliography) and the periodical *Onomasiology Online* (<http://www.onomasiology.de>), which is edited at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt by Joachim Grzega, Alfred Bammesberger and Marion Schöner.

3. The Object Language: English

English belongs to the group of Germanic languages, i.e. English goes back to the same proto-language that is also the “mother” of Dutch, Low German, High German, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Icelandic. The group of Germanic languages, in turn, belongs to the Indo-European language family, like the Romanic languages (e.g. Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian) and their “mother” Latin, the Celtic languages (e.g. Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic), the Balto-Slavic languages (e.g. Polish, Czech, Croatian, Russian, Lithuanian) and others. The date of the birth of English is normally given as 449, when the three Germanic tribes of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes are said to have settled over from the continental areas by the Northern Sea. The first written records of English can be dated back to the 7th century. The period from the mid-5th century to around 1100 is referred to as Old English, the period from 1100 to around 1500 as Middle English, the period from 1500 to around 1750 as Early Modern English and the period thereafter as Modern English.

Over these periods the English language underwent a great deal of sound changes. The most frequent ones are presented in the following table.

Explanations of symbols:

<xxx> angle brackets embrace letters

/xxx/ slashes embrace symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

xxx italics are used for the historical transcription system

(N.B.: Modern English spelling often represents a sound state of the 15th/16th century.)

In historical transcription (which rather uses diacritic signs than special symbols) we use the following conventions:

ˉ above a letter means that the vowel is long

˘ above a letter means that the vowel is short

◌ below a letter means that the vowel is open

◌◌ below a letter means that the vowel is close

OE. symbols

<y> = /y/

<þ> = /θ ~ ð/

<č> = /tʃ/ (the hook above the <c> does not occur in OE. manuscripts, but is added by modern editors to distinguish the sound from <c> /k/)

For the representation of sound laws, certain abbreviations and mathematical symbols may be used:

V = vowel, C = consonant, N = nasal, L = liquid

| = under the following condition

— = place of aforementioned sound

* = not

[= in open/free syllable (i.e. a syllable ending in a vowel sound)

] = in close/checked syllable (i.e. a syllable ending in a consonant sound)

(1) Spontaneous Changes among Long Vowels

When we speak of a spontaneous sound change, we mean that a sound always changes the same way independent of any specific context. While changes of the long vowels from OE. to ModE. have been relatively few, there was an enormous shift of long vowels characterizing the EModE. period (1500-1750). This shift is known as the *Great Vowel Shift*:

OE.	ME.	ModE.
<i>hūs</i> <hus> →	<i>hūs</i> <house> →	/h <u>au</u> s/ <house>
<i>mōna</i> <mona> →	<i>mōnə</i> <mone> →	/m <u>u</u> n/ <moon>
<i>stān</i> <stan> →	<i>stōn</i> <stone> →	/st <u>ou</u> n/ <stone>
<i>fēt</i> <fet> →	<i>fēt</i> <feet> →	/f <u>i</u> t/ <feet>
<i>mīn</i> <min> →	<i>mīn</i> <mine> →	/m <u>a</u> n/ <mine>
<i>mȳs</i> <mys> →	<i>mīs</i> <mice> →	/m <u>a</u> ɪs/ <mice>

(2) Spontaneous Changes among Short Vowels

The three conspicuous spontaneous changes among the short vowels are the following:

(a) the development of OE. *y*

OE.	ME.	ModE.						
<i>y</i>	<i>y</i> <u> (West Saxon dial.) <i>i</i> (Anglian dial.) <i>e</i> (Kentish dial.)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><bury></td> <td><much>, /m<u>ʌ</u>tʃ/</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><kiss>, /k<u>i</u>s/</td> </tr> <tr> <td>/b<u>e</u>ri/</td> <td><merry>, /m<u>e</u>ri/</td> </tr> </table>	<bury>	<much>, /m <u>ʌ</u> tʃ/		<kiss>, /k <u>i</u> s/	/b <u>e</u> ri/	<merry>, /m <u>e</u> ri/
<bury>	<much>, /m <u>ʌ</u> tʃ/							
	<kiss>, /k <u>i</u> s/							
/b <u>e</u> ri/	<merry>, /m <u>e</u> ri/							

(b) the development of ME. *u*

ME.	ModE.
<i>but</i> <but> →	/b <u>ʌ</u> t/ <but>

(c) the development of OE. unstressed final syllables

OE.	ME.
- <u>V</u> <i>mōna</i>	- <u>ə</u> <i>mōnə</i>

(3) Combinatory Changes among Vowels

When we speak of a combinatory sound change, we mean that a sound changes a certain way only in specific contexts.

[N.B.: *homorganic* means ‘articulated at the same place of articulation’]

(a) OE. short vowels before consonant clusters

OE.	ME.	ModE.
$\check{v} _ + \text{N/L} + \text{homorganic voiced C} \rightarrow$ <i>čild</i> →	\bar{v} <i>čīld</i> →	/tʃaɪld/ (vs. /tʃɪldrən/)

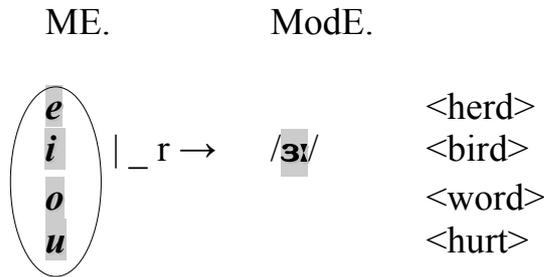
(b) OE. long vowels before consonant clusters

OE.	ME.	ModE.
$\bar{v} _ *(+ \text{N/L} + \text{homorganic voiced C}) \rightarrow$ <i>sōfte</i> → <i>wīsdōm</i> →	\check{v} <i>sōft</i> <i>wīsdom</i> /'wɪzdəm/ (vs. <i>wise</i> /waɪz/)	

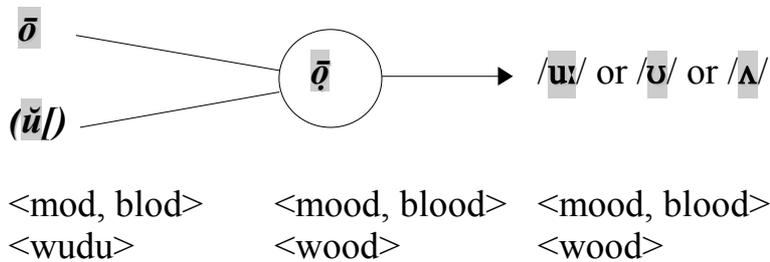
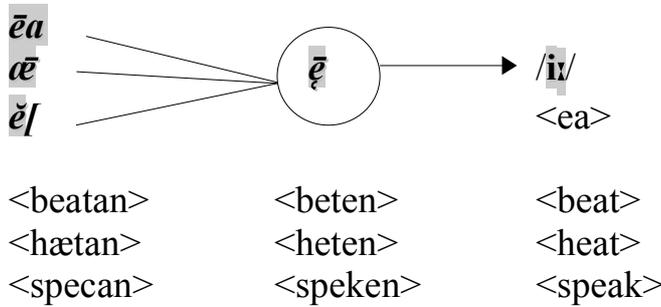
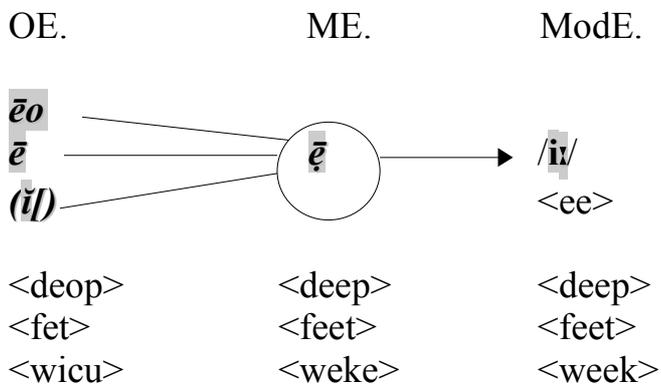
(c) OE. short vowels in open stressed syllables of bisyllabic words

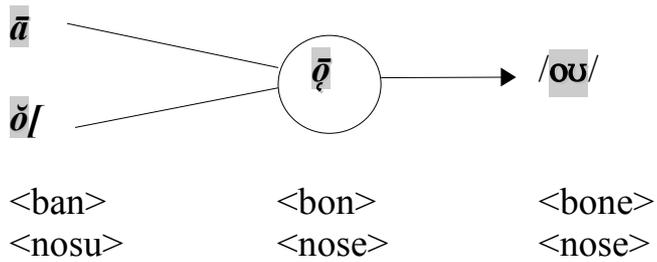
OE.	ME.	ModE.
$\check{v}[\rightarrow$	open \bar{v}	
<i>nǣ[ma</i> →	<i>nāmə</i> →	/neɪm/
<i>spē[kan</i> <specan> →	<i>spēkə</i> →	/spi:k/
<i>nō[su</i> →	<i>nōsə</i> →	/nɔʊz/
and less regularly:		
<i>wī[ku</i> <wicu> →	<i>wēkə</i> →	/wɪk/
<i>wū[du</i> →	<i>wōdə</i> →	/wʊd/

(d) ME. short vowels before *r*



(4) Vowel Mergers from OE. to ME.

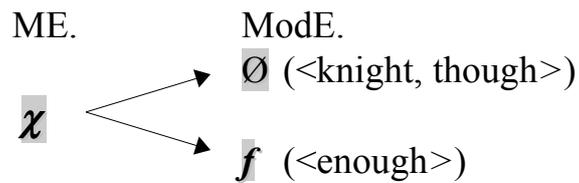




(5) Consonant Changes

OE.	ME.
\bar{b} - →	$/\bar{ð}/$ in function words (<they, though>)
\bar{s} - →	$/\bar{z}/$ in function words (<is, his>)
\bar{f} - →	$/\bar{v}/$ in some function words (<of>)

N.B.: $/\bar{\delta}/$, $/\bar{z}/$, $/\bar{v}/$ (and $/\bar{z}/$) become phonemes only in ME.



4. Instruments

What do you do when you encounter a designation (or designations) for a concept which has changed? Where do you look for information? The best friends of an onomasiologist in such a case are **linguistic atlases, historical and etymological dictionaries** (= dictionaries that give the history of words) and **thesauri** (= dictionaries that are structured according to conceptual fields and give synonyms and antonyms).

If you are just interested in a broad overview to get a first insight into the variety of designations for a concept then the first works you should consult are the dictionary by Buck (1949) and the *Atlas Linguarum Europae (ALE)*. There you will find the most frequent varieties of designations for a concept. But again: you will only find the most frequent designations there. If you want to carry out deeper research, then other books will be necessary, too. There is quite a number of historical, dialectal and etymological dictionaries, and thesauri:

- for the pre-history of English: the *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch (IEW)*
- for Old English (OE.): the *Thesaurus of Old English (TOE)* (no etymological information included), Jember's dictionary (1975) and Holthausen's etymological dictionary (1963) with its supplementary work by Morris (1968) and Bammesberger (1974).
- for Middle English (ME.): the *Middle English Dictionary (MED)* (with etymological information)
- for Early Modern English (EModE.): the *Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME)*
- the etymological dictionaries by Onions (ODEE), Klein (1966-1967), Barnhart (1995) and Terasawa (1997)
- the *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles (DAE)*
- the *Chronological English Dictionary (CED)* as well as Flavell/Flavell (2001)
- the various editions of Roget's *Thesaurus* (since 1852, including Davidson 2002)
- the dictionary of synonyms and antonyms by Urdany (1995)
- the most renowned historical and etymological *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, which is available also on-line and constantly updated (a novel on the relationship between one of its most important collaborators and its first major editor was written by Samuel Winchester in 1998; it is entitled *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*).

Moreover, the *Historical Thesaurus of English (HTE)* is currently in the making. In addition to this, onomasiologists may want to use linguistic corpora:

- the *International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English (ICAME)*

- the *Old English Corpus* (OEC)
- the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* (CMEPV)
- for English English dialects: the *Survey of English Dialects* (SED) and, as supplements, Orton's *Word Geography of English* (WGE), Upton/Sanderson/Widdowson (1987) and Upton/Widdowson (1996)—in addition, the *English Dialect Dictionary* (EDD) can be used in a semasiological approach
- for American English dialects: the single volumes of the *Linguistic Atlas Project* (LAP) (cf. <http://us.english.uga.edu/>), the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (DARE), Carver (1987) and—for the early stages of American English—Pickering (1816).

Furthermore, etymologists may sometimes need to compare words with the same suffixes. Here the reverse dictionary by Muthmann is useful (1999).

In order to find whether there are etymological studies on Old English or Middle English words, the collections by Cameron/Kingsmill/Crandell (1983) and Sylvester/Roberts (2000) are helpful. In order to find out whether there exists a linguistic map on a certain concept, an index is provided by Fischer/Ammann (1991). If you want to create your own linguistic maps, blank maps are available on-line under <http://geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm>. A comprehensive list of onomasiological sources is provided by the internet platform *Onomasiology Online* (<http://www.onomasiology.de>).

Task 1: Take out one of the sources above and say which pieces of information are given by an entry.

Task 2: Compare the information given in the source you chose in Task 1 to the information of a similar source in another language.

Task 3: Compare the information you can gather from an entry in a thesaurus with the one from a monolingual semasiological dictionary.

Further Reading Recommendations for this Chapter

A complete list of onomasiological instruments (dictionaries and atlases) can be found in the respective bibliography in *Onomasiology Online* (<http://www.onomasiology.de>). Further general sources on the field of onomasiology are Cruse 2002-2005, Lipka 2002 and Grzega 2004b. The instrument of the thesaurus and its history are presented by Marengo (1990) and by Hüllen (1999). Descriptions of the history of the English language, including its sound developments, are provided by Baugh/Cable (1978/1991), Crystal (2000), and the CHEL.

II. Basic Notions of Onomasiology

Every word has a history, every word has an origin, every word has a motivated origin—even if the origin might no longer be transparent due to phonetic changes.

Task 1: Take a dictionary with etymological information (e.g. the OED) and check the origin of the following words: (a) *daisy*, (b) *gospel*, (c) *Thursday*, (d) *cupboard*.

Everybody constantly has to decide how to denote things s/he wants to talk about. How does naming work?

Task 2: Think of the various ways to call the mobile phone: E. *mobile phone*, *carphone*, *cell phone*, *cellular (phone)*, also *wireless*, Fr. *portable*, It. *telefonino*, G. *Handy* (a pseudo-Anglicism playing with the German word *Hand* ‘hand’). For the concept GLASSES we find E. *glasses*, Fr. *lunettes* (literally “little moons”), It. *occhiali* (literally “things belonging to the eyes”), G. *Brille* (from the G. name for the crystal *beryl*). How might people have come up with these designations?

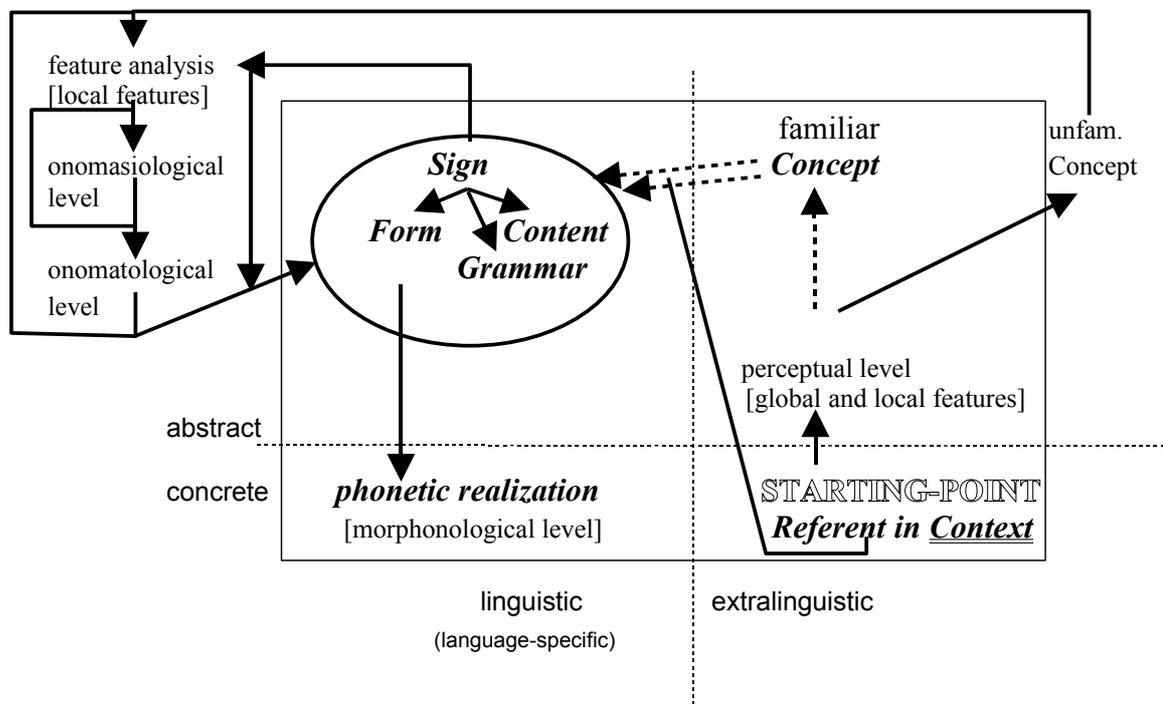
What does the naming process look like in slow-motion? The following table presents the steps illustrating them with the birth of the names for “the season after summer and before winter”.

1. First there is the particular Referent in Context, or a type of Referent. By <i>Context</i> we refer to the speaker-hearer situation, the type of discourse, the communicative goal, the syntactical context.	I, living in America, need to refer to THE TRANSITORY PERIOD AFTER SUMMER AND BEFORE WINTER.
2. The speaker first tries to categorize it by processing its more basic, “global” and its more specific, “local” features. S/he tries to classify the thing by using some kind of mental checklist	It’s no longer summer, but it’s not winter yet.

<p>(absence and presence of certain features) and by comparing the overall image of the thing with other images already in the mind. This level is the perceptual level. The checklist method is known as structural semantics, while the more recent approach of prototype semantics classifies things according to the degree that they share with the prototype of a certain category—the prototype is the most typical kind of a category (example: the prototypical bird in the US is the robin; a robin that can't fly because of a broken wing is still a robin and it is still a bird; a penguin may not be able to fly, but because of other features shared with the robin we would still classify it as a bird, although not a prototypical, but a peripheral one).</p>	
<p>3. If the speaker can classify the (concrete) Referent as member of a familiar (abstract) Concept, s/he can fall back on an already existing word or s/he can, more or less consciously, decide to coin a new designation. The decision will be based on some kind of cost-benefit-analysis, i.e. the speaker has to ask him/herself what the goals of his/her designation and utterance should be: does the speaker want to sound like the hearer, does the speaker want to speak different from others, should the designation be precise or vague, does the speaker want to sound vulgar, sophisticated, boorish, polite? The cost-benefit-analysis could be described as “linguistic economy”. In the case of intentional, conscious innovation the speaker then has to pass several levels of a word-finding, or name-giving, process.</p>	<p>What can I call this period?</p>
<p>4. The first step will once again be the analysis of the specific features of the concept (= feature analysis)--with a focus on the local features. The level of feature analysis can be spared if the</p>	<p>There is no clear-cut end of summer and no clear-cut beginning of winter, but the period in between typically</p>

<p>speaker simply borrows a word from a foreign language or variety that corresponds with the concept in question; it is also spared if the speaker simply takes the word s/he originally fell back to and shortens it somehow.</p>	<p>shows a falling degree of temperature, days are shorter and nights are longer, precipitation gradually increases, leaves change their colors from green into brown, red and yellow and finally fall, most crops are harvested. In France they call it <i>autumn</i>.</p>
<p>5. Then the speaker will select one or two features that shall serve as the basis for the designation. We could refer to this as “naming in a more abstract sense”. The designation motives can be called iconemes. The iconemes are basically founded on similarity, contrast, partiality and contiguity/contact relations. This level could be termed the onomasiological level. Here again, the speaker respects the extralinguistic context.</p>	<p>trees loose their leaves</p>
<p>6. The next level could be termed the onomatological level. Here concrete morphemes are selected (“naming in a more concrete sense”). If the speaker does not shorten an already existing word for the concept, but coins a new one, s/he can select from several types of processes. The coinages may be based on a model from the speaker’s own idiom, on a model from a foreign idiom, or on no model at all.</p>	<p>verb {fall} > conversion into noun</p>
<p>7. Then, the word is given a fixed form-content relation and given certain grammatical features—a Sign is born.</p>	<p><i>autumn</i>: /'ɔ:tʌm/, ‘season after summer and before winter’, noun, regular <i>fall</i>: /fɔ:l/, ‘season after summer and before winter; action of falling’, noun, regular</p>
<p>8. Finally the Sign is phonetically realized.</p>	<p>['ɔ:tʌm], [fɔ:l]</p>

These observations can be illustrated in the following model:



In sum, we clearly have to distinguish between **concept** (put in small caps), **sign** (= word; set in italics) and phonetic realization (put in square brackets). Diachronically working onomasiologists want to determine the original form (= **etymon**). In order to do so they have to shed light on the formal, or phonetic, history of the word and on the iconemic and semantic history of the word. They have to check historical documents and see what the forms looked like and how exactly they were used. In order to support phonetic hypotheses, onomasiologists have to prove that there exist the same sound developments in other words of the language or dialect in question. This means that they have to be familiar with the various sound developments in English language history. In order to support iconemic and semantic hypotheses, linguists have to prove that these are paralleled by other designations in the language in question or in any other language. This second necessity has sometimes been neglected in etymological works.

Task 3: Determine the etymons and iconemes of the terms for the following concepts in English language history and compare them to other languages: (a) SPRING (SEASON BEFORE SUMMER) and AUTUMN (SEASON AFTER SUMMER), (b) GIRL (IMMATURE WOMAN), (c) UGLY (NOT OF APPEALING

APPEARANCE), (d) UNDERSTAND, (e) WEDNESDAY (for this concept cf. grzega 2001), (f) BRIDEGROOM. What is special about the last two items?

Further Reading Recommendations for this Chapter

Alinei 1995, Blank 2001, Fischer 1998, Grzega 2002b, Grzega 2004b, Lipka 2002, Štekauer 1998 and 2001.

III. Forces Triggering Off Lexical Change

The causes of language change in general (not only on the lexical level) are frequently of economic nature: Speakers connect a speech act with a certain goal, a certain target, a certain intention, briefly: a certain effect. Speakers like to reach this effect with the best possible efficiency, i.e. to use the least possible motoric or cognitive effort, respecting—according to their needs—certain maxims such as “Make your contribution convincing/credible/emphatic etc.”, “Make clear what you mean.”, “Show yourself in the best possible light.”, “Be polite/dominant/obsequious etc.”, “Express yourself in a sophisticated/humorous/etc. manner.” and the like. Maxims for dynamics may trigger linguistic changes, which may secondarily be conserved in the language through maxims for statics. In general, constant linguistic change is not planned, but simply occurs, as a by-product. That’s why some speak of an “invisible hand” here—a metaphor taken from Adam Smith’s explanation of economic processes. These things, as we’ve said, hold true for all types of linguistic change.

What triggers, causes, effects lexical change? This is the topic of the chapter. The principal question is: why does lexical change occur at all, what are the forces behind it? The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with plausible explanations for lexical change. The second part deals with explanations which certain authors mention, but which have been dismissed as forces for lexical change in the sense of change in the *langue*, the system of language. Their mention here may be helpful in your further studies of the subject.

1. Forces

Onomasiology is supposed to take the increase as well as the decrease of the number of designations for a concept into consideration, the deficiencies of words that die out as well as the advantages of those words that take their place, reasons which are tied to features of the concept as well as reasons that are tied to features of the linguistic form, linguistic causes as well as extra-linguistic causes. Forces triggering off lexical change can be rather conscious or rather subconscious. Lexical change is mostly caused by a combination of various factors.

New Concept and Unnamed Concepts

New concepts normally also require a designation. Sometimes, however, concepts exist without a separate designation and only require one when their salience or people's consciousness about their existence rises.

Changes in the Referent

If a concept changes in a way that the speaker does not perceive it as a completely new subject, it may still be given a new name, especially if the older variants of the concept still exist beside the newer ones. ~~Example:~~ If eating habits change in the way that people sometimes have a mixture of a warm and cold meal quite early in the day, e.g. 10:30 a.m., the speaker feels uncomfortable using either the term *breakfast*, which is not taken that late, or *lunch*, which is not taken that early; therefore the term *brunch* was coined.

Quite often, however, although the referents change, the designation is constant because the referent's function is still the same. From a semasiological aspect this process is called substitution, e.g. ME. *pen* 'feather' is still used for denoting a writing device although feathers are no longer used for writing or for manufacturing these writing utensils.

Task 1: Check the OED for the history of the word *noon*.

Changing World View, Changing Categorization of the World

We can speak of world view change when we refer to changes in the categorization of the world. It is not the referents that change, but the organisation of the content of the sign, the organization of the concept, the relevance of the referents in the world. This may, in turn, be due to a change of encyclopaedic knowledge, social and cultural habits etc. ~~Example:~~ That *girl* is more and more used to denote TEENAGE FEMALE HUMAN has to do with a changing view on what childhood and adolescence are, viz. that children and teenagers are not simply smaller versions of adults.

Task 2: Link the phenonemon of world view change with the use of the following words: (a) *dialect*, (b) *democracy*, (c) *politeness*.

Task 3: Link the phenonemon of world view change with the use of animal names on the level between the generic one "animal" and the specific

one, which has “cow”, “dog”, “fox”, “lion”, “fly”, “bee”, “lizard”, “trout”, “frog”, “sparrow”, “robin” etc.

Onomasiological Fuzziness

Fuzziness means that something is vague, that it is vaguely definable and does not have clear boundaries. Under “onomasiological fuzziness” we can subsume the following three phenomena, which are often hard to keep apart:

- the semasiological problem that a speaker is unable to distinguish between concepts, although s/he knows the existing terms (conceptual ignorance)
- the encyclopaedic problem that a speaker regards different concepts as genetically related, although they might not be so (blurred concepts)
- the onomasiological problem that a speaker is able to distinguish between different concepts but is unable to assign the right term (referential ignorance)

Since it is historically quite difficult which of the three types of fuzziness existed, the phenomena have been bracketed by one term.

Task 4: A conceptual field in which words are not seldom mixed up in many languages is the field of body-parts. Look at the history of the use of some body-part terms in English and other languages.

Official Language Policy

Institutional, or official, language policy refers to laws or law-like rules which an institution creates for its speech community. A well-known example is France’s law against the use of Anglicisms in official contexts, which is known as *Loi Toubon*. Already the language academies in Italy, Germany, France and Spain erected in the 16th and 17th centuries saw the banning of too many foreign words as one of their main tasks. In Britain and the US, there is no “language academy”, but there has been the Plain English Movement since the 1970’s, which pleads for clear and understandable language in official documents for the broad population. Lexically, their demands were relevant in so far as they asked for more common terms instead of rare learned terms and the use of shorter words instead of longer words.

Task 5: Find the “plain English” wording in the right column that matches the “inflated English” wording in the left column.

1. education user

a. doorman

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 2. patient care specialist | b. cook |
| 3. dining room assistant | c. waiter |
| 4. access controler | d. elevator operator |
| 5. member of the vertical transportation corps | e. writer |
| 6. learning facilitator | f. student |
| 7. food and beverage consultant | g. nurse |
| 8. content provider | h. teacher |

Task 6: Revise the following sentence to make words as simple as you can without changing the meaning.

To say that one who has contracted to serve for a number of years at a low salary at distasteful work and seeks to better his or her condition by a contract with another party should be penalized in every case by inability to enforce this second contract seems harsh, and under these or other extenuating circumstances, the courts have often deemed damages to be sufficient recompense to the injured employer without also invalidating the second contract.

Inofficial Language Policy

In contrast to official reasons, inofficial language policy does not evolve from any official institution but from members of the general language community. A good example for unofficial language policy is youth language. It deliberately uses terms that differ from the vocabulary of the older generation.

Task 7: What does youth language serve for? Discuss.

Task 8: Look for a current dictionary on youth slang. Have a look at the first 5 pages and try to group the entry words into larger units. What are the features that you base your categorization on?

Taboo and Political Correctness

Taboo is a term from Indonesian meaning ‘thing which is forbidden’. This also implies the prohibition to designate things with their real name. Taboo is the socially demanded avoidance of a concept or words for a concept which in itself may be offensive or which may be neutral. A modern form of taboo is known as *political correctness*, in other words: the use of disguising language for characteristic features of a certain group of people (or concepts) with the aim to avoid allegedly discriminating expressions.

~~Example:~~ *chairperson* or *chair* instead of *chairman*.

Task 9: Check the range of synonyms for the following concepts in your country: (a) BATHROOM-PLUS-TOILET, (b) DIE. Which of the synonyms might have come up due to taboo?

Task 10: What are things and words that are tabooed in your community?

Task 11: Do you have the phenomenon of political correctness in your country. How did this phenomenon develop in your country?

Task 12: Collect words that have come up due to political correctness in your country and another country of your choice.

Disguising Language, “Misnomers”

While taboo words are words that have been banned by the speech community, “misnomers” are words that individuals have decided to coin in order to deceive the hearer by disguising unpleasant concepts. ~~Examples:~~ E. *friendly fire* instead of *bombardment by own troops*.

Task 13: Have a look at the political language in the history of your or an English-speaking country and find “misnomers”.

Flattery and Insult

Flattery and insult, as opposed to taboo and disguising language, do not reduce emotions about a concept, but even focus on the recipient’s emotions in order to win him or her over or to achieve loss of his or her face. Flattery (e. g. *gentleman* < *gentle man*) consciously keeps to the rules of a speech community, insult (e.g. *whitey*) consciously violates these rules.

Task 14: Decide whether the following examples belong to flattery, insult, taboo or disguising language: *urinate*, *water*, *micturate*, *piss*, *pee*.

Task 15: Check the OED and find out how exactly *uncle* and *aunt* got entrenched into English and how this is related to flattery.

Task 16: Sometimes expressions including the name of a nationality are used as a flattering or insulting way to describe a certain concept, e.g. *to take French leave* to denote LEAVING WITHOUT SAYING GOOD-BYE (which may at the same time also go back to word-play, cf. below). Find other

examples from English or another language.

Prestige, Fashion

Lexical change may be based on the prestige of another language or another variety of the same language, certain fashionable word-formation patterns or certain fashionable semasiological centers of expansion. The kernel of this force is mostly found outside of language. It is often the prestige of a culture, the superiority of a group or politics which cause speakers to adopt linguistic elements (words, morphemes, morphs, sounds) from the prestigious group's speech. Example: English, for instance, borrowed heavily from French during the ME. period because the upper social classes were made up of French people: *garment, flower, rose, face, prince, hour, question, dance, fork, royal, loyal, fine, zero* are all Gallicisms. Today, English is now the most prestigious language for many parts of the world.

Task 17: Take 10 lines of any English text and find out the words of French origin.

Task 18: Have a look at ten commercials, or advertisements, from an English country and discuss whether advertising language shows any specific word-formation patterns.

Social, or Demographic, Reasons

By social, or demographic, reasons we shall refer to the contact between different social groups. This contact may easily, and rather subconsciously, trigger off lexical change—the more intensive the social contact is, the more intensive the linguistic exchange. Example: In the history of the English language, the two prominent instances of exchanges between two social groups were the one with the Vikings in the 8th to 11th centuries and the one with the French in the 11th to 15th centuries. The force of direct contact between different speech communities must not be mixed up with the prestige force, where no direct contact with the other speech community is necessary. Thus, we can say that the early French loans (from Northern French) rather go back to the everyday contact with the English population and the French soldiers, not so early French loans (from Parisian French) go back to the prestige of the French aristocracy, the French loans in the official bilingual phase of England's history may either go back to prestige or to the social contact or to both. Examples: The inherited *ey* is replaced by Scandinavian *egg*, the inherited *nimen* is replaced by Scandinavian *taken* except for the

form *benumb*, *thrown* is supplemented by Scandinavian *casten*; early French loans are *army*, *carpenter*, *catch*.

Task 19: Think of the development of youth slang words becoming neutral terms.

Anthropological Salience of a Concept (“Natural Salience”)

It is the nature of humans that some concepts automatically raise emotions. Such emotion-laden concepts can attract a large number of synonyms. Conceptual fields that are typically affected by this are found in the realm of the basics of life, feelings and valuations, attributes, hopes and expectations. ~~Example~~. In the Germanic languages most designations for the basic concept GOOD go back to the same root: E. *good*, G. *gut*, Du. *goed* and Swed. *god*. In contrast, the ultimate positive pole and the more negative degrees on a scale are more emotion-laden; for the concept BAD we thus find a wide variety of terms coming from different etymons and going back to different iconemes: E. *bad*, *evil*, G. *schlecht*, *schlimm*, Du. *slecht*, *kwaad*, *erg*, Swed. *ond*, *elak*, *dålig*.

Again, within the scale of expressions there is often a neutral term with only a few variants, but beside other concepts exist which differ from norms and expectations and which, the more they tend towards the ends of the scale, the more likely they are to stimulate emotion and imagination.

Task 20: Just as BAD is non-neutral and thus an emotion-laden concept, so is VERY GOOD. What are synonyms for VERY GOOD in English and other languages?

Culture-Induced Salience of a Concept (“Cultural Salience”)

Sometimes concepts are not salient to humans because of general human nature, but because of the concepts’ cultural values. Their salience can change with the change of culture. ~~Example~~. The increased importance of arts and fashion has affected the lexical treatment of the conceptual field of colors: from a vague differentiation between *dark blue* and *light blue* to a neat distinction between *cobalt blue*, *royal blue*, *indigo* etc. (such neat detailed differentiations often originate in expert slang and then penetrate the language of the general speech community).

Conceptual fields which have gained salience through cultural importance may very well serve as designations in other conceptual field in the form of metaphors.

~~Example:~~ In the US, a lot of metaphors in general language have been taken from the field of baseball, e.g. *to be off base* ‘to be completely wrong’, *to hit a home run* ‘to be highly successful’ and from the field of entrepreneurship.

Task 21: What are concepts where your designation differs from the one that your parents use?

Dominance of the Prototype

By *prototype* we mean the cognitively or numerically most typical, the most prominent, the “ideal” member of a category. The phenomenon that some members of the same conceptual field have a higher prominence than others may lead to the developments of gradual subconscious shifts of terms denoting the prototype or the class that the prototype belongs to. One possible result is a generalization, or widening of meaning, of the original designation for the prototype. ~~Example:~~ *kleenex*, originally a trademark for a specific tissue, is now used to refer to any kind of tissue. Another possible result is specialization, or narrowing of meaning. ~~Example:~~ The word *corn* has seen a restriction in use, from a general term to denote CEREAL (IN GENERAL) to a term that refers to the kind of cereal that is most prominent in a given region, such as OATS in Scotland and WHEAT in England. A third possible result is that the designation of the prototype serves as a basis for the designation of concepts of the same hierarchical level. ~~Example:~~ The prototypical fruit of Europe is the apple. Other fruits and vegetables which were imported during the last centuries were named according to that term, as to be found in various European languages: E. *pine-apple*, G. *Apfelsine* ‘orange’, *Erdapfel* ‘potato’, Du. *sinaasappel* ‘orange’, Fr. *pomme de terre* ‘potato’, It. *pomodoro* ‘tomato’. It might be debated that to what degree the factor “wish for plasticity” has its share in these last developments.

Task 22: Look for additional examples where a trademark becomes a generic term (also in other languages).

Task 23: Look for the development ‘cereal’ > ‘specific kind of cereal’ in other varieties of English and in other languages.

Wish for Plasticity

The wish for plasticity means the wish for clear, also figurative phrases. Onomatopoeic words (i.e. sound-imitating words such as *cuckoo*) and hyperbole (i.e. exaggerating

words *love* for “like”) are prime examples of this wish. Another designation-type that is triggered by the wish for plasticity are tautological compounds. These are compounds where one element is (at least from an historical viewpoint) semantically also included in the other element. Examples are *peacock*, originally just *pea*, and *hound dog*, beside just *hound*. Still another example is “over-specification”, e.g. *Martian* instead of *alien*.

Task 24: Look at the histories of the animal terms *guinea pig* and *turkey* and relate them to the wish for plasticity. Compare the etymologies also to the designations for these animals in other languages.

Task 25: Look at the words for the first, second, third, fourth and fifth finger of a hand. What are they called in English and other languages?

Aesthetic-Formal Reasons: Homonymic Conflicts and Polysemic Conflicts

When we see no connection between the two or more meanings connected to a form, we speak of *homonymy*, and we speak of *polysemy* when we do sense a connection between the two or more meanings connected to a form. In other words, polysemy is the extension in use of an already existing lexeme and thus a quite usual and economic way to find new designations. This means that polysemy does usually not represent an obstacle, but an aid for communication. However, if one of the meanings falls into the domain of taboos, the entire word-form (including its other senses) might be banned. Here, we could speak of a polysemic conflict. Example: In American English, the word *ass* for ‘horse-like grey animal’ was substituted for *donkey* because the former sounds too much like *arse* ‘bottom, bum’. Also, many Americans use *rooster* for the animal because *cock* is also used for “penis”.

Furthermore, if the form of a designation becomes too similar to a taboo word, this word might become forbidden as well. Example: Many Americans see *niggard* (originally a Scandinavian word) as a derivate from the taboo word *nigger* (originally a Latin loan) and therefore replace it by *miserly*.

It is important to note, however, that in both these cases communication is nowhere broken down; within contexts the meanings and references are clear. Therefore we cannot speak of communicative-formal reasons. The conflict lies in the fact the words may raise associations with taboo words in the hearer’s mind and thus give the impression that the words are dirty. We may thus speak of aesthetic-formal reasons.

Task 26: Can you think of words in your community that are avoided because they sound like taboo words?

Communicative-Formal Reasons: Homonymic Conflict

Once again: we speak of *homonymy* when we see no connection between the two meanings of a form, e.g. like *straight* and *strait* (note that the spelling is not important—the term *homophony* might therefore be used as well). Homonymy does not automatically lead to conflict situations where misunderstandings are predictable. Many linguists have overused homonymic conflict as an argument for lexical changes. Actually, a true homonymic conflict can thus only occur when the two potential senses of a form can realistically appear in the same context.

How does homonymic conflict evolve in the first place? What are the reasons for two words to become homonyms if this makes communication more difficult? There are several causes for this:

- rapid speaking, dropping of sounds at the ending of words (example: ME. *brēd* ‘bread’ and *brēdǣ* ‘roast’ become the same if the second is pronounced rapidly and thus loses the *ǣ*)
- change in the phonetic system (example: ME. *strait* [strait] ‘narrow, tight’ and ME. *straight* [straixt] ‘unbent’ became homophonous after [x] disappeared from the English sound system)
- the cohabitation or concurrence of speakers of different dialects or languages (example: ME. *swīen* ‘make noise’ vs. *swīen* ‘be quite’)
- cultural reasons which cause originally unproblematic homonymy or polysemy to become conflictuous (example: *hot* ‘of high temperature’ and *hot* ‘spicy’)
- change of meaning (example: EModE. *person* ~ *parson* ‘person; clerical person = priest’ > *person* ‘person’ vs. *parson* ‘priest’).

If we look at the definition once again, it becomes clear that homonyms lead to communicative conflicts only in certain situations. For instance, in English *hot* can mean ‘spicy’ or ‘of high temperature’, which indeed creates a conflict if you’re warning somebody “Be careful! The food is hot.” A counter-example is the Old French *hui* ‘today’ vs. *oui* ‘yes’. Of course, this is a case of homonymy, but it is hardly imaginable in which contexts a conflict should occur?

But what happens if homonymic conflict does occur? What does the language community do to the words to dispose of the inconvenience caused by homonymic conflict? There are basically three ways of getting out of it:

- loss of one or both words (example: *queen* [kwi:n] ‘queen’ vs. *quean* [kwi:n] ‘prostitute’ in Early Modern English—the latter has been replaced by several loanwords, indigenous words and new word formations)

- restriction of one of the words only to certain contexts (example: *to weigh* ‘to measure the weight’ vs. *to weigh* ‘to lift’, the latter today only in *to weigh anchor*)
- formal modification of one or both words (example: ME. *flower* ~ *flour* > *flower* vs. *flour*)
- formal supplementation (example: *hot-hot* vs. *spicy-hot*)

Task 27: Check the SED (as well as the TOE, OED and EDD) to gather information about the development of the names for “ear” and “kidney” in English dialects.

Word-Play

The category of word play includes humor, irony and puns. Although word-play often goes hand in hand with other factors (such as taboo, prestige or anthropological salience), it can also trigger lexical change on its own. Example: ModE. *perfect lady* ‘prostitute’, *to take French leave* ‘to leave secretly (without paying)’, *to cool* ‘look’ (< *look* pronounced backwards, so-called back slang).

Task 28: Enter the keyword “humorous” into the “Etymologies” field in the Advanced Search window of the OED online. Which of the words that you get are restricted to a specific variety only, which ones have already become part of the general vocabulary?

Excessive Length of Words

A word may be perceived as too long if it is needed constantly. This perception can then lead to the shortening of the term or to the preference use of a shorter synonym. Like homonymic conflict, excessive length has been overused as an argument by many linguists. Again, excessive length of a word can only be a reason for lexical change if the word occurs frequently in the language. Example: ModE. *fax* instead of *telex*. This means that there is no general tendency to avoid long words.

Task 29: Check the “Among the New Words” section of the linguistic periodical *American Speech* and discuss whether replacements of longer words by shorter words can be traced back rather to word-play or rather to excessive length of words or to both.

Morphological Misinterpretation

Morphological misinterpretation refers to the normally unconscious process of interpreting a meaningful/senseful form into polysyllabic (and seemingly polymorphemic) words. We refer to the result of such a process as folk-etymology. ~~Example:~~ The French *contredanse* was reinterpreted as *country dance* in English.

Task 30: Such misinterpretation are frequent in plant-names. Search the internet for dialect names of colt's-foot (botanic name: *Tussilago farfara*) and look for similar developments.

Task 31: Use the OED online and enter the terms *good* and *God* as keywords into the "Etymologies" line of the Advanced Search window. Make a list of the words where *good* and *God* have been mixed up and check whether these can further be classified into semantic groups.

Logical-Formal Reasons

Logical-formal reasons are responsible for the adaptation of morphological irregularities. ~~Example:~~ Apart from the monomorphemic *cheap* people also coined the derivate *inexpensive* (especially popular in AmE) as an antonym for *expensive*.

Task 32: Check the OED online by checking a few occupational terms by means of the "Definitions" line in the Advanced Search table and see whether you kind find designations that go back to logical-formal reasons. Can you further categorize these professions?

Lack of Motivation

Lexical change as an effect of lack of motivation means that a word is less and less used because it is not motivated enough, i.e. there is no clear, visible motive and so a more motivated synonym takes over and the use of the original word is restricted or becomes obsolete.

Onomasiological Analogy

Analogy means that a certain phenomenon is modelled, or patterned, on another phenomenon. As a factor for lexical change the term (*onomasiological*) *analogy* can be

used when a specific lexical change develops on the analogy of another, previous lexical change. Brought into a formula we can say this: Concept A is no longer be expressed by x, but by x+1. In analogy to this, the related concept B is no longer be expressed by y, but by y+1. ~~Example:~~ Shortly after ME. *spring* was used to express THE SEASON BEFORE SUMMER, *fall* began to be used to denote THE SEASON AFTER SUMMER on the analogy of this. On a number of CD's we find the form *outro* instead of *close*—an obvious coinage on the analogy of *intro* (itself clipped from *introduction*).

Secondary Effects

Secondary effects do not refer to a lexical change, but the change of the linguistic situation of a certain lexeme. Such a change is caused by a related lexeme. ~~Example:~~ The expressions *to starve* and *to die* were initially used as synonyms in the English language. Through its close phonetic relation to the adjective *dead*, *to die* was preferred over *to starve*. When *to die* entered English from Old Norse, it was used more and more often and, as a secondary effect, *to starve* was used restrictedly for DIE OF HUNGER.

Summarizing List

The complete list of forces triggering lexical change reads the following items:

- onomasiological fuzziness (i.e. difficulties in classifying the referent or attributing the right word to the referent, thus mixing up designations)
- dominance of the prototype (i.e. fuzzy difference between superordinate and subordinate term due to the monopoly of the prototypical member of a category in the real world)
- social reasons (i.e. contact situation with “undemarcation” effects)
- institutional and non-institutional linguistic pre- and proscriptivism (i.e. legal and peer-group linguistic pre- and proscriptivism, aiming at “demarcation”)
- flattery
- insult
- disguising language (i.e. “mis-nomers”)
- taboo (i.e. taboo concepts)
- aesthetic-formal reasons (i.e. avoidance of words that are phonetically similar or identical to negatively associated words)
- communicative-formal reasons (i.e. abolition of the ambiguity of forms in context)
- word play/punning
- excessive length of words
- morphological misinterpretation (“folk-etymology”, creation of transparency by changes within a word)
- logical-formal reasons (“lexical regularization”, creation of consociation)
- desire for plasticity (creation of a salient motivation of a name)
- anthropological salience of a concept (i.e. anthropologically given emotionality of a concept, “natural salience”)
- culture-induced salience of a concept (“cultural importance”)
- changes in the referents (i.e. changes in the world)
- world view change (i.e. changes in the categorization of the world)
- prestige/fashion (based on the prestige of another language or variety, of certain word-formation patterns, or of certain semasiological centers of expansion)

Task 33: Try to group all these forces mentioned in this chapter into more encompassing units, e.g. (a) rather conscious vs. rather subconscious forces, (b) innovative vs. destructive forces, (c) speaker-oriented forces vs. hearer-oriented forces.

Task 34: Try to match the phenomena on the left side with the examples from the right side. Use the OED or another etymological dictionary if need be:

<i>Alzheimer's disease</i> > <i>old-timer's disease</i>	communicative-formal reasons (homonymic conflict)
SOMEONE WHO IS ADDICTED TO WORKING: <i>plodder</i> >	dominance of prototype

<i>Alzheimer's disease</i> > <i>old-timer's disease</i>	communicative-formal reasons (homonymic conflict)
<i>workaholic</i>	
<i>to use Google</i> > <i>to google</i>	word-play + wish for plasticity (+ fashion)
OE. <i>lettan</i> 'to hinder' > ModE. <i>let</i> (arch.) vs. OE. <i>lētan</i> 'to allow' > ModE. <i>let</i>	logical-formal reasons
EYE-LASH: <i>eye-bree</i> (orig. 'eye-lid')	morphological misinterpretation
<i>motor-car</i> > <i>car</i>	onomasiological fuzziness
<i>stānwyrhta</i> > <i>mason</i>	fashion
<i>æg</i> > <i>egg</i>	social reasons

2. Dismissed Explanations

This section unites arguments that older works mention as forces triggering lexical change. Closer inspection, however, reveals that these arguments cannot be considered factors relevant for lexical change. The examples linked to them can actually all be connected with one or several forces mentioned in Section 1.

Excessive Shortness of a Word

Some linguists claim that short words often lack a solid phonetic body and are therefore replaced. In fact, many English words show that short words are quite common: *eye* [aɪ], *ear* [iə], *egg* [eg], *ill* [ɪl]. The disappearance of a short word rather has to do with a lack in motivation.

Difficult Pronunciation

The argument that difficult pronunciations may make a speech community replace one word by another can only come from someone who doesn't speak the language or dialect at issue. For native speakers there is no such thing as difficult sounds or sound combination as they are just natural to them.

Misreading and Mispronouncing

Some scholars have thought that misreading and mispronouncing are forces behind entrenched lexical change. However, this is not very probable. Mispronunciations and misreadings are only produced by one person and are often only a momentary, sporadic “phonetic” accident. There is no real danger that such things get petrified in language or trigger off lexical replacements.

Ignorance, Laziness, Carelessness

Some authors argue that loanwords have come into a language because the translator was either too lazy or too ignorant to search for the “proper” indigenous word. This explanation seems imaginable for sporadic formations, but there is no proof that such things could get entrenched into the language.

Decrease in Salience

Such as increase in salience might trigger lexical change, some scholars think that the same must be true for a decrease in salience. Decrease in salience does not trigger off lexical change itself, because when concepts lose importance or emotionality, their terms are simply forgotten or, due to formal-logical reasons and the demand for plasticity, get replaced by more transparent words. It is hardly conceivable how a decrease in salience should stimulate creativity—therefore this is not a convincing explanation for lexical change.

Further Reading Recommendations for this Chapter

A general account of factors of language change is provided by Labov (1994, 2001) as well as McMahon (1994). Early discussions on the motors of linguistic change can be found in Whitney (1875) and Jespersen (1941). On the economic invisible-hand theory see Smith (1776). Apart from Grzegza (2004a), overviews of forces triggering lexical

change are presented in Prins (1941, 1942), Visser (1949), Blank (1999) (with a focus on the occurrence of new meanings, though), and in Grzega (2002a and, very briefly, 2004b). Some forces are given special focus in the literature: the issue of political correctness by Beard/Cerf (1994), Maggio (1997, 2002) and Nagle/Fain/Sanders (1998), the issue of world categorization and salience by Brown (1979) and Lakoff (1987), the use of the prototypicality argument by Grzega (2003b), homonymic conflicts by Menner (1936) and Williams (1944), the phenomenon of remotivation by Olschansky (1996) and Palmer (1882), and the topic of excessive length by Zipf (1949).

IV. Processes of Name-Giving

Before reading this chapter you should try to do the following task.

Task 1: Look at the following coinages and try to categorize the origins of the words for ZERO into three groups: *zero* (< Fr. *zéro* ‘zero’), *o* (< the letter *o*), *nil* (< Lat. *nihil* ‘nothing’), *nought* (< *ne-a-wiht* ‘not a person’), AmE slang *goose-egg* (< *goose* + *egg*).

1. General Observations

In describing motivations behind certain changes of meaning, associative principles are of great importance. The four basic associative principles are similarity, contiguity, partiality and contrast. Form-wise (cf. Task 1), there are three big groups: old words in new use (*o*), juggling with already existing linguistic forms (*nought*, *goose-egg*), borrowing (*nil*, *zero*).

2. Old Words in New Use: Semantic Change

Semantic change is the type of lexical change in which no formally new creation occurs, but an already existing form is extended in use. The subclassification of this type of lexical change follows the associative principles mentioned in Section 1.

2.1. “Similar-to” Relation: Metaphors

Metaphor is defined as semantic change on the basis of **similarity** between two concepts from different frames, i.e. from different situation-types. This similarity can be perceptual or functional and it can relate to effect, behavior, an abstract form etc. Metaphors are always intentional. ~~Examples:~~ *beam* ‘ray of light < log (of a tree)’ , *sweet* in *sweet voice*, *peach* in the sense of ‘attractive’.

2.2. “Neighbor-of” Relation: Metonymies

Metonymy is a semantic change on the basis of **contiguity** of concepts belonging to the same frame. Through the process of metonymy, one term is replaced by another term whose concept has a real connection (causal, spatial, temporal) with the concept the term is then used for. ~~Example:~~ *horn* ‘musical instrument (originally made of the hollow, stiff, pointed projection of the skin on the head of many animals)’ < ‘hollow, stiff, pointed projection of the skin on the head of many animals’, *judgement* ‘the result of judging’ < ‘the action of judging’. Sometimes a proper name is taken to serve a concept related to the name-bearer. This specific type of metonymy is called eponymy. ~~Example:~~ *hoover* ‘vacuum cleaner [for which the company *Hoover* was an important producer]’, *casanova* ‘womanizer’.

2.3. “Part-of” Relations: Synecdoches

The underlying associative principle for synecdoches is the **partiality** of concepts, which can best be described as a ‘part-of’ relationship. ~~Example:~~ *beam* ‘log (of a tree) < tree (OE. *bēam*)’.

2.4. “Kind-of” Relations: Generalizations and Specializations of Meaning

These processes refer to all cases of semantic change in which the old and new meanings are in a superordinate-subordinate relationship. A bird, for instance, is a conceptual entity superordinate to sparrow, robin, chicken etc. The term for a superordinate entity on a hierarchy is called *hyperonym*, while a subordinate term is called *hyponym*.

Shifts between hierarchical taxonomic levels are based on “kind-of” relations. If a term for a concept on a superordinate level is used to denote a concept on a subordinate level we speak of specialization, or narrowing, of meaning. ~~Example:~~ Gmc. **deuza* ‘wild animal’ > E. *deer* ‘special/specific kind of animal’. If a term for a concept on a subordinate level is used to denote a concept on a superordinate level we speak of generalization, or broadening/widening, of meaning. ~~Example:~~ Gmc. **deuza* ‘wild animal’ > G. *Tier* ‘[any **kind of**] animal [in general]’.

2.5. “Sibling-of” Relations: Cohyponymic Transfer

Like generalization and specialization of meaning, cohyponymic transfer has to do with

taxonomies as well. But this time we have to do with horizontal, not vertical shifts. We could call this a case cohyponymic transfer. Co-hyponyms can belong to one frame or they can occur between different frames, as is the case with metaphors. ~~Examples:~~ ModE. *fir* – G. *Föhre* ‘pine tree’. However, we need to make sure that this transfer is really just a lexical change and does not have to do with reconceptualizations or the enlargement of a concept as happened, for instance, with the American bird known as *Turdus migratorius* among zoologists, which by the layperson is seen as a brother of the European *Erithacus rubecula* and thus also called *robin*.

2.6. “Contrast-to” Relations: Antiphrasis, Auto-Antonymy, Auto-Converseness

Some semantic changes are based on contrast relationships. A semantic change on the basis of a contrast between “source” concept and “target” concept is called *antiphrasis*. One example is ModE. slang *perfect lady* for PROSTITUTE.

If there is a (polar) contrast of the “source” concept and the “target” concept that can be grouped on a kind of scale, we can speak of *auto-antonymy*. ~~Example:~~ E. slang *bad* for GOOD.

Some also use the term *auto-converseness* to denote the confusion between two terms that describe one and the same relationship from different angles. ~~Example:~~ In some English dialects *teach* is used to denote LEARN. However, there is no real need to introduce this term since such cases can all be seen as metonymies.

2.7. Combined Relations: Metaphtonymies

There are some cases which are a combination of metaphor on the one hand and a synecdoche or metonymy on the other. Such a combination is called a metaphtonymy. Such phenomena are quite frequent among plant-names. ~~Example:~~ The plant colt’s-foot got its name because a salient part of it, the leaves, looks like the foot of a colt.

Task 2: Use a botanic book (e.g. Grigson 1974) or a linguistic atlas to search for other plant-names that show metaphtonymy.

2.8. Conceptual Recategorization

Strictly speaking, a conceptual recategorization is not just a lexical phenomenon, but predominantly—as the word says—a conceptual one. This means that because a referent

or a set of referents is given the membership of another category, it naturally also receives its designation. Example: A community with 10,000 inhabitants is a *city* in Britain, but a *town* in the US.

Task 3: Take a study on the development of color terms (e.g. Matschi 2004) and check how color nuances are categorized differently over times.

3. Juggling with Existing Forms: Word-Formation

Composites and nowadays also conversion seem to be the most important types of word-formation in English. Apart from these there is also the possibility of shortening and merging words. This chapter will make you familiar with the relevant processes of word-formation as well as their associative motivations.

3.1. Sticking Together Morphemes: Composite Forms

One way of creating new words is to stick together two morphemes or words or, more generally, linguistic forms. These can be called composite forms. In traditional literature a distinction is made between composite forms of at least two stems (compounds) and composites of at least one stem and a non-grammatical affix (derivations). Examples: *drive* + *-er* 'agent of a activity' > *driver*, *truck* + *drive* + *-er* > *truck driver*, *screw* + *drive* + *-er* for INSTRUMENT THAT HELPS DRIVE SCREWS INTO SOME OTHER MATERIAL, *red* + *skin* > *redskin* for AMERICAN INDIAN, *paleface* for SOMEONE OF THE CAUCASIAN RACE, *arm* + *-let* > *armlet* for a BANDAGE FOR AN ARM.

Task 4: Pick out one page of an English thesaurus and determine (and describe) all composites.

Task 5: Look at the following words and discuss the overlaps with semantic change: *screwdriver*, *skyscraper*, *frogman*.

Task 6: Look at the following designations of persons, discuss potential difficulties in deciding whether these are composites or ellipses of composites or metonymies: *redskin* for AMERICAN INDIAN, *greenhorn* and *tenderfoot* for UNEXPERIENCED NOVICE and *snowflake* for CHILD RESULTING FROM THE IN UTERO TRANSPLANTATION OF A PREVIOUSLY FROZEN EMBRYO.

3.2. Overlapping Words: Blends

Blending is the intentional merging of the final part of a first word with the initial part of a second word so that the result looks like an overlap of two words. ~~Examples:~~ *smog* < *sm*[oke + *f*]og, *brunch* < *br*[eakfast + *l*]unch, *motel* < *m*o[tor + *h*]o[te]l, *slanguage* < *slang* + *language*.

3.3. Folk-Etymology

A folk-etymology results from the subconscious process of interpreting a (formal) “sense” into polysyllabic (and seemingly polymorphemic) words. Folk-etymologies share certain features with blends and compounds, but, as we’ve said, are the result of an subconscious process. ~~Examples:~~ colloq. *sparrow-grass* < *asparagus*, a *nick-name* < ME. *an eke-name* “an additional name”, *bridegroom* < OE. *brydguma* “bride-man”.

Task 7: Take an etymological dictionary and find out the history of these words: *sandblind*, *bridegroom*, *penthouse*, *sweetheart*, *buttonhole*, colloq. *chaise lounge*.

Task 8: Discuss whether, from a formal point of view, folk-etymologies could not simply be put into the group of composite words.

3.4. Conversion

Conversion is the use of a word of one word-class in a different word-class without changing the stem. It may be interpreted as if an original phrase was shortened to its most important element. ~~Examples:~~ *to e-mail* < [*to send an*] *e-mail*, *to google* < [*to use*] *Google*.

Task 9: Check English newspaper headlines for conversions.

Task 10: Can you find conversions among prepositions and conjunctions?

3.5. Phonetic Alternation

Sometimes a new word is created by simply shifting the accent—a process that some linguists would see as a subtype of conversion. ~~Example:~~ *ábstract* (noun) vs. *abstráct* (adjective).

3.6. Deleting Morphemes: Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the deletion of a morpheme in an original composite form that was already there as a designation for the concept at issue. In principle, we could distinguish between two types of morpheme deletions:

(1) the determined part is left out (e.g. E. *daily newspaper* > *daily*)

(2) the determining part is left out (e.g. E. *newspaper* > *paper*, *Indian corn* > *corn*)

With type (1) we really have to verify whether there was an older composite form since otherwise we would have to speak of a metonymy; but even if we know that there's an older form we can't be sure about the exact cognitive process. With type (2) things are often still more difficult: is it really the case that *Indian corn* was shortened to *corn* (ellipsis) or is it the case that Indian corn is such a frequent instance of corn that *corn* was simply used to refer to the prototype (specialization of meaning).

Task 11: Check the attestations of *car* in the OED and discuss whether this is rather a case of specialization of meaning or an ellipsis of *motor-car*.

3.7. Back-Derivation

Like ellipsis, back-derivations consist of the deletion of a morpheme. However, here not a stem, but an (assumed) derivational suffix is deleted so that the result belongs to another word-class. More important, the speech community did not take an already existing synonym for the concept at issue, but a designation for a related concept, or we might say: a designation for the same concept, viewed from a different perspective.

Example: *to edit* < *editor*, *to transcript* < *transcription*.

3.8. Deleting Morphs: Clipping

While ellipsis is the deletion of a morpheme (= the smallest linguistic unit carrying meaning) of an already existing designation for a concept, clipping is the deletion of a meaningless morph (= a string of sounds) of an already existing designation, the shortening of a morpheme. Examples: *doc* < *doctor*, *mike* < *mikrophone*, *pub* < *public house*.

Task 12: Find the original form of the following words: *blog*, *flu*, *gym*, *fan*.

3.9. Taking Out Letters: Acronyms

An acronym is a word coined by taking the initial letter of the elements of an expression and using them as a new word. ~~Examples:~~ *CD* < *Compact Disc*, *TV* < *television*, *VAT* < *value added tax*. In the terminology of some linguists, to be an acronym and not just an abbreviation the new word should not be pronounced as a series of letters like [vi: eɪ 'ti:] but as a word like [væt]. Acronyms must not be mixed up with abbreviations like *e.g.* or *int'l*. Some linguists writing on word-formation also use a lot of proper names to demonstrate the salience of acronymy in modern times. However, proper names always have to be separated from common words—they have their own rules. And if you do want to include proper names in your studies, you must do so for the other word-formation types as well.

Sometimes acronyms become so common that they lose their character as acronyms. ~~Examples:~~ *emcee* < *MC* < *master of ceremony*, *okay* < *OK* [the exact origin of *OK* is still a hotly debated issue].

Task 13: Sometimes abbreviations become acronyms in slang. Find examples from English and other languages.

Task 14: Find out the full forms of these acronyms: *jeep*, *laser*, *M.A.*, *radar*.

Task 15: Discuss the classification of the following words from a word-formation perspective: *bridegroom*, *e-commerce*, *skyscraper*, *workaholic*, AmE *address:address* vs. BrE *address:address*.

4. Using Foreign Words: Loans and Calques

At various stages of the word-finding process the word-coiner may want to have a look at another variety or language. Basically, the word-coiner can either adopt a foreign form (importation, loans) or pattern his/her formation with his/her own language material on a foreign form (substitution, calques). In English language history, we have a clear preference for substitutions in Old English, and a growing degree of importations in later stages of English.

4.1. Importation

Importation means that you simply adopt (and often adapt) a foreign word instead of running through the entire word-finding process. ~~Examples:~~ E. *weltanschauung* < G. *Weltanschauung*, It. Sp. *mouse* 'computer mouse' < E. *mouse*, E. *Renaissance* < Fr.

Renaissance. Some linguists make a distinction between still unassimilated foreign words (e.g. *Renaissance* pronounced as [ˈrenesɑːns]) and assimilated loanwords (e.g. *Renaissance* pronounced as [rəˈneɪsəns]), but this opposition is often hard to apply to the many intermediate stages of the integration, or adaption, of a word.

In English language history, the most important donor languages for loans are: Latin (in various waves from the late 6th century until today: Ecclesiastical Latin, Medieval Latin, and—with many Greek elements—Neo-Latin), Old Norse (8th to 11th centuries, first in spoken language—which is why most Scandinavian words don't appear in English texts until the 11th century), and French (11th to 15th centuries).

Task 16: Identify the source language of the following loan words: (a) *skin*, (b) *veal*, (c) *ballet*, (d) *altar*, (e) *sky*, (f) *psychology*.

Task 17: Compare the history of the following word-pairs: *coffee—café*, *hostel—hotel*, *zero—cipher*.

Task 18: Observe to what degree foreign words have become or are becoming integrated into your mother tongue.

4.2. Substitution

Substitution means that at some part in the word-finding process you look at the equivalent in the foreign language or variety and then try to take your own material to copy the formation in the foreign language or variety. Such formations are called *calques*. There are several ways of modelling indigenous coinages on a foreign designation.

- If the foreign term is a composite form, you simply translate the single elements with the semantic equivalents of your own language; this is called *loan translation*. Examples: G. *Weltanschauung* > E. *world-view*, E. *sky-scrapers* > Fr. *gratte-ciel* / It. *gratta-cielo* / Sp. *rasca-cielo* [in French, Italian and Spanish the word-order is reversed, though].
- If the foreign term is a composite form, you look at the iconeme behind the formation and try to render this iconeme somehow with indigenous language material; this is called *loan rendering*, or *loan rendition*. Example: E. *sky-scrapers* > G. *Wolkenkratzer* (literally “cloud-scrapers”).
- If the foreign term is not a composite form, you look at the entire semantic range of the word and then search for indigenous equivalents of the other senses of the foreign

word and then provide your indigenous word with the same semantic range; this is called *loan meaning*. ~~Example:~~ How should the computer mouse be designated? Step 1: In English the designation is *mouse*; but what else does this word mean? Step 2: E. *mouse* also denotes THE RODENT MOUSE, so let's look for the indigenous equivalent for this concept. Step 3: This word is also taken to denote COMPUTER MOUSE, e.g. G. *Maus*, Fr. *souris*, Sp. *ratón*.

It is, of course, not always clear whether there is a foreign model or whether the designation is an independent coinage.

Task 19: Check Buck's dictionary for the designations of the days of the week in Indo-European languages.

4.3. Partial Substitution

There are also cases where one part of a foreign composite is directly borrowed and the other part is translated. These formations are occasionally also referred to as *loan blends*. ~~Example:~~ E. *Saterday* < Lat. *Saturni dies*.

4.4. Other Types of Borrowing

Sometimes a word is not borrowed in its exact original construction. ~~Example:~~ G. *Happy End* < E. *happy ending*. Sometimes a word is coined with foreign material although this very formation with the foreign material does not exist in the donor language itself; in these instances we speak of *pseudo-loans*. ~~Examples:~~ E. *difficult* could also be termed a back-derivation from the true Gallicism *difficulty* instead of an importation of Fr. *difficile*. Fr. It. *footing* was coined for E. *jogging*, G. Du. *hometrainer* for E. *exercise bicycle*).

Task 20: In English the phenomenon that semantically related words are not related morphologically is wide-spread: *mouth—oral*, *word—dictionary*, *ask/interrogate—question*. This phenomenon is called morphological dissociation. Look for other examples. What might be the reason for this phenomenon?

Task 21: Take a language (maybe your mother tongue) which has both borrowed words from English and loaned words into English. What differences are there in the amount and kinds of words that have been borrowed in each direction and the periods of when the loanwords

occurred? Try to find reasons for the differences.

Task 22: Look for pseudo-loans in your mother tongue.

5. Other Name-Giving Processes

Apart from the three basic name-giving types—semantic change, word-formation, borrowing—there is also a number of minor processes, predominantly based on playing with words.

5.1. Humpty-Dumpty Rule

The Humpty-Dumpty-Rule, named after the famous puns of the character Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, refers to the result of a string of invisible intermediate stages from the original, "usual" sense to the new sense. Example: *tank* 'large receptacle for liquids' > 'military armoured car [which looks like a receptacle, and the guns are seen as the contained liquids]'.

5.2. Secretion

We use *secretion* for a particular word, or word-element, that becomes associated with a particular novel sense in some figurative idiomatic expression and when the figurative sense element is retained although the word, or word-element, has disengaged itself from the unit which gave rise to the figurative sense in the first place. Examples: E.slang *avenue* for POSSIBILITY < *to try every avenue* for EXPLORE ALL POSSIBLE MEANS, *egg* for PERSON < *bad egg* 'bad or rotten person'.

5.3. Rhyming Slang

We speak of rhyming slang when a word is substituted by a bipartite word in which the second element is a rhyme with the original word. Examples: E.slang *to pipe your eye* replacing *to cry*, *charming wife* replacing *knife*, *longers and lingers* replacing *fingers*.

Task 23: Check the "Among the New Words" section of an issue of the linguistic periodical *American Speech* and categorize the new words according to their designation process and check how prominent the processes that have been presented under 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 are.

6. Dismissed Types of Processes

We will now be concerned with some phenomena which are traditionally grouped under the heading of name-giving processes. Let us first have a look at “amelioration of meaning” and “deterioration of meaning”. A classical example of amelioration and deterioration of meaning is the change from OE. *cniht* and *cnafa* both ‘boy, servant’ into ModE. *knight* (amelioration) and *knave* (deterioration). But they might also be seen as metaphors: *knight* as ‘servant of the king’ and *knave* as ‘someone belonging to a lower social class, like a servant’. Another classical example of so-called deterioration of meaning is the change from *gourmand* ‘someone who eats a lot’ being used synonymously with *gourmet*. This could also be seen as a case of folk-etymology.

From these examples, we can already see that amelioration and deterioration of meaning never occur independently, but always in combination with other name-giving processes. But should we classify them into categories of their own? In all cases of so-called amelioration and deterioration of meaning, there is a specific communicative goal, e.g. to downplay, disguise, make better a “negative” thing – with a secondary effect: the “value of a word” decreases, i.e. the thing that is denoted evokes negative connotations and so does the designation. This is then called “deterioration”. So the only thing that distinguishes these processes from other metaphors, metonymies, folk-etymologies etc. is this communicative goal. But if we wanted to keep the communicative goals in mind in cataloguing all name-giving processes, the catalogue would become very large and confusing; this is something we want to avoid. So amelioration and deterioration of meaning will not be classified as separate name-giving processes in this manual. Similar things hold true for reinforcement of meaning (hyperbole) and weakening of meaning (litotes). The first could also be subsumed under the heading of expressive speech and the latter under euphemisms. Some scholars even classify them as processes which work via other processes such as metonymy, co-hyponymic transfer, metaphor, etc. Again, there is a problem involved then if we want to establish a set of name-giving processes: it seems reinforcement and decrease of meaning are no independent processes at all, but either secondary effects of the processes named above or sub-forms of them. In either case, they have to be excluded from the catalogue of name-giving processes.

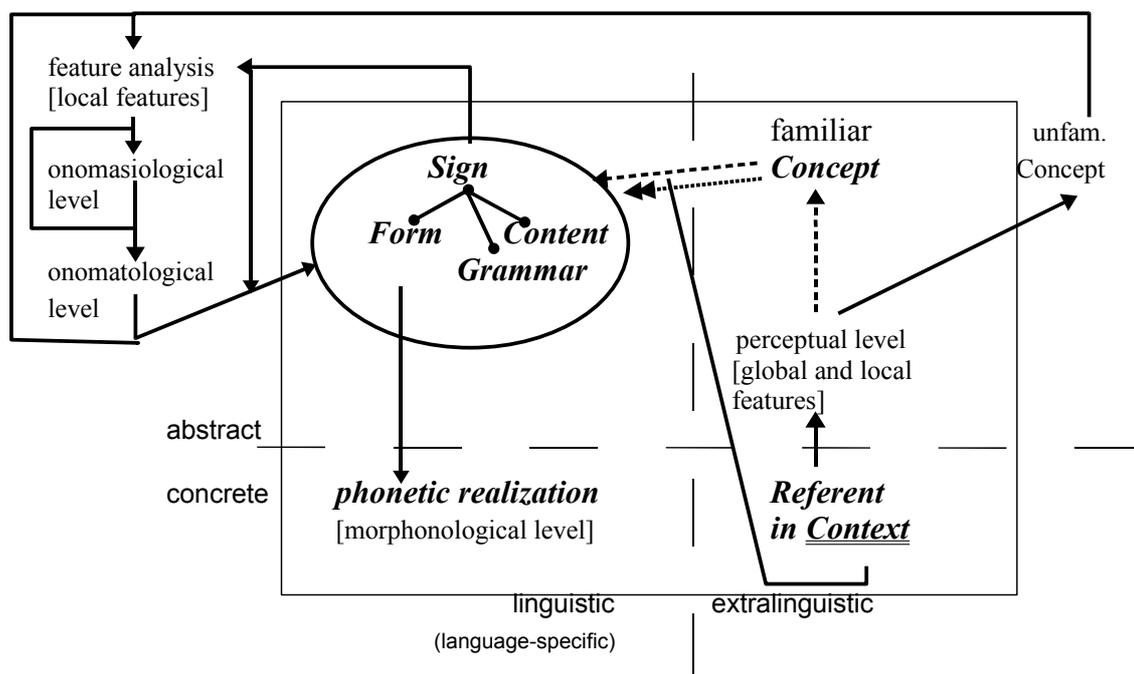
Further Reading Recommendations for this Chapter

Apart from Grzega (2004a), overviews on name-giving processes are provided by Algeo (1978, 1980), Koch (2002) and—very brief—Grzega (2004b). Some authors have

focussed on specific name-giving processes: Algeo (1990a and 1990b), Blank (1997a), Blank/Koch (1999b), Geeraerts (1997), Grzega (2000a), Stern (1931), Traugott/Dasher (2002), Ullmann (1962), Warren (1992) on semantic change; Nerlich/Clarke (1999) on synecdoche; Partridge (1949) on eponymy; Bauer (1983), Grzega (2002b), Štekauer (1996, 1998, 2000, 2001) on English word-formation; Davy (2000) on shortening phenomena; Blank (1997b) on word-formation in general; Algeo (1990b), Baugh/Cable (1978/1991) and Cannon in several works (Cannon 1988, Cannon/Kaye 1994, Cannon/Warren 1996, Pfeffer/Cannon 1994, Cannon 1998) on (English) borrowings; Grzega (2003a) on borrowings in general. The issue of Anglicisms in other languages is dealt with by Görlach (2001, 2002a, 2002b).

V. Summary: A Synthetic Model of Lexical Change

The basic onomasiological process consists in the elements of the following scheme, which departs from a concrete Referent in Context:



This scheme has to be read as follows: When Speaker has to name a particular Referent in Context (speaker-hearer situation, type of discourse, communicative goal, syntactical co-text), s/he first tries to categorize it by the perception of its global and local features (i.e. s/he tries to generate a referent-to-concept classification). If Speaker can classify the Referent as member of a familiar Concept, s/he, while carrying out a cost-benefit-analysis (conversational maxims: motoric and cognitive effort on the cost side vs. persuasion, representation, image, relationship and aesthetics on the benefit side), can fall back on an already existing word (provided that s/he was not mistaken in the classification of the Referent or in the choice of the word, thus unintentionally triggering off lexemic change) or s/he can, more or less consciously, decide to coin a new

designation.

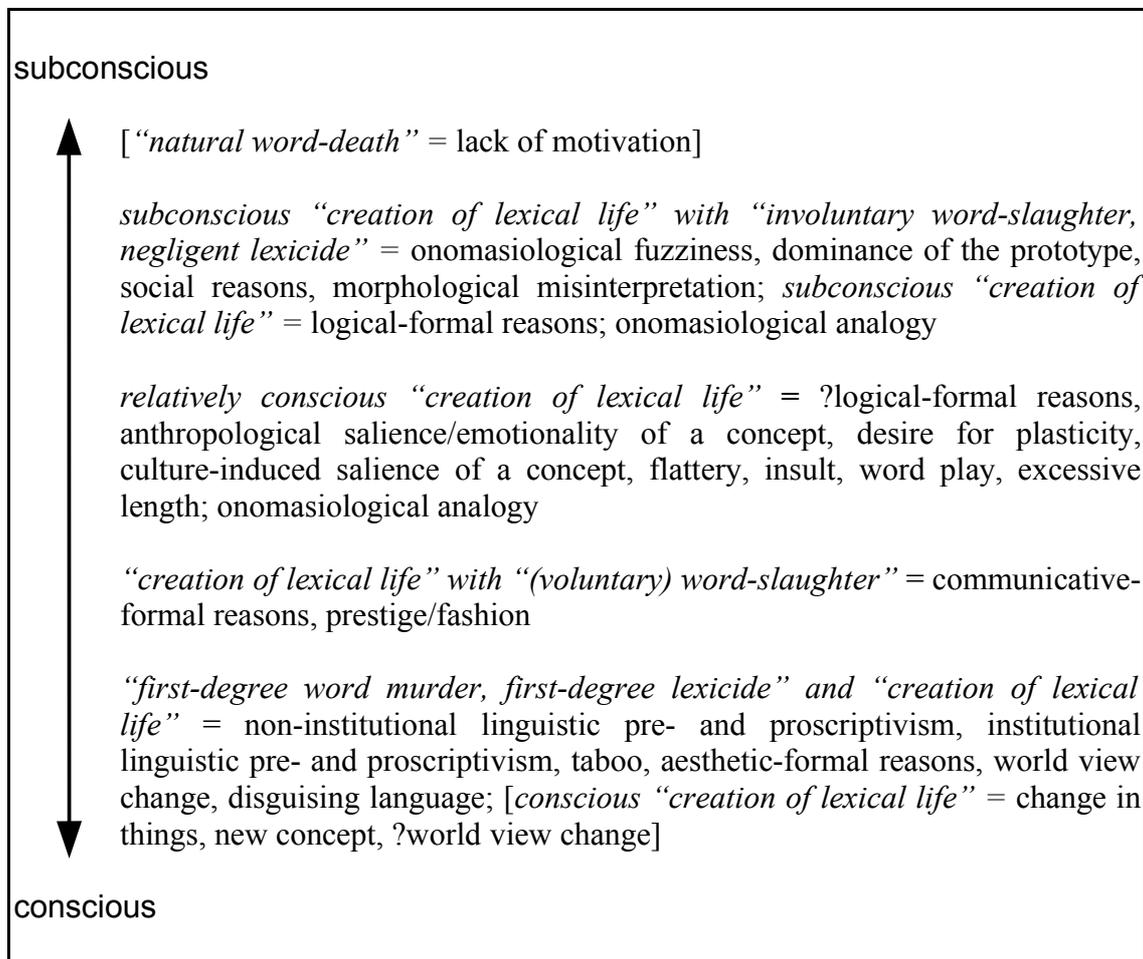
The (intentional or non-intentional) coinage of a new designation can be incited by various forces, which can also co-occur. A catalog of forces reads the following items:

- onomasiological fuzziness (i.e. difficulties in classifying the referent or attributing the right word to the referent, thus mixing up designations)
- dominance of the prototype (i.e. fuzzy difference between superordinate and subordinate term due to the monopoly of the prototypical member of a category in the real world)
- social reasons (i.e. contact situation with “undemarcation” effects)
- institutional and non-institutional linguistic pre- and proscriptivism (i.e. legal and peer-group linguistic pre- and proscriptivism, aiming at “demarcation”)
- flattery
- insult
- disguising language (i.e. “mis-nomers”)
- taboo (i.e. taboo concepts)
- aesthetic-formal reasons (i.e. avoidance of words that are phonetically similar or identical to negatively associated words)
- communicative-formal reasons (i.e. abolition of the ambiguity of forms in context, keyword: “homonymic conflict and polysemic conflict”)
- word play/punning
- excessive length of words
- morphological misinterpretation (keyword: “folk-etymology”, creation of transparency by changes within a word)
- logical-formal reasons (keyword: “lexical regularization”, creation of consociation)
- desire for plasticity (creation of a salient motivation of a name)
- anthropological salience of a concept (i.e. anthropologically given emotionality of a concept, “natural salience”)
- culture-induced salience of a concept (“cultural importance”)
- changes in the referents (i.e. changes in the world)
- world view change (i.e. changes in the categorization of the world)
- prestige/fashion (based on the prestige of another language or variety, of certain word-formation patterns, or of certain semasiological centers of expansion)

The following alleged motives found in previous works have proven to be invalid: decrease in salience, reading errors, laziness, excessive phonetic shortness, difficult sound combinations, unclear stress patterns, cacophony.

Using the “word death” metaphor the valid motives, which are also tied to the conversational maxims presented above, could be localized on conscious-subconscious

continuum, where the gradual subconscious loss of a word can be compared to “natural (word) death” and where the conscious avoidance of a word can be compared to “(word) murder” (these two poles embrace several intermediate degrees):



Subconscious innovations come up in the form of folk-etymologies, metonymies, synecdoches, generalization, specialization, cohyponymic transfer, “syntactic recategorization” (i.e. conversion), morphological alteration or phonetic-prosodic alteration.

In the case of intentional, conscious innovation Speaker has to pass several levels of a word-finding, or name-giving, process: analysis of the specific features of the concept, onomasiological level (where the semantic components for the naming units, the so-called iconemes, are selected [“naming in a more abstract sense”]), and the onomatological level (where the concrete morphemes are selected [“naming in a more concrete sense”]). The level of feature analysis (and possibly the onomasiological level) can be spared if Speaker simply borrows a word from a foreign language or variety; it is

also spared if Speaker simply takes the word s/he originally fell back to and shortens it by way of morpheme deletion (ellipsis), morpheme shortening (clipping), morpheme symbolization (acronymy and short-forms), or blending of its elements (blending).

If Speaker does not shorten an already existing word for the concept, but coins a new one, s/he can select from several types of processes: various forms of composing (incl. blends and phraseologisms), back-derivation, adoption of an already existing word, syntactical recategorization (i.e. conversion), several forms of alteration, word-play and root creation. The coinages may be based on a model from Speaker's own idiom, on a model from a foreign idiom, or, in the case of root creations, on no model at all. In sum, we get the following catalog of formal processes of word-coining:

- (1) adoption of either (a) an already existing word of Speaker's own idiom (semantic change) or (b) a word from a foreign idiom (loanword)
- (2) syntactical recategorization (i.e. conversion)
- (3) composition (*lato sensu*, i.e. compounds and derivations, which are, very consciously, not further subclassified)
- (4) morpheme deletion (ellipsis)
- (5) morpheme shortening (clipping)
- (6) morpheme symbolization (acronyms and short-forms)
- (7) blendings (including folk-etymologies, although these come up non-intentionally)
- (8) back-derivation
- (9) reduplication
- (10) morphological alteration (e.g. number change, gender change)
- (11) clarifying compounds (i.e. tautological compounds)
- (12) wordplaying
- (13) phonetic-prosodic alteration (e.g. stress shift in E. *import* vs. *impórt*)
- (14) graphic alteration (e.g. E. *discrete* vs. *discreet*)
- (15) phraseologism
- (16) root creation (including onomatopoeic and expressive words)

The process is completed with the actual phonetic realization on the morphonological level (which may possibly be influenced by a foreign sound model).

In order to create a new word on the onomatological level, Speaker first selects one or two physically and psychologically salient aspects on the onomasiological level (respecting the situational context, i.e. the conversational maxims and the motives for innovating). The search for the motivations (iconemes) is based on one or several cognitive-associative relations. These relations are:

- (1) identity (e.g. with loans)
- (2) “figurative”, i.e. individually felt, similarity of the concepts (e.g. with metaphor), partially in connection with contiguity of concepts
- (3) contiguity of concepts (e.g. with metonymy), partially in connection with “figurative” similarity of the concepts
- (4) partiality of concepts (e.g. with synecdoche)
- (5) contrast of concepts (e.g. with antiphrasis)
- (6) “literal” or “figurative” similarity between the forms of a sign and the concept (e.g. with onomatopoeic words)
- (7) strong relation between contents of signs and “literal” similarity of concepts (e.g. with generalization of meaning)
- (8) strong relation between contents of signs and contrast of concepts (e.g. with auto-antonymy)
- (9) strong relation between contents of signs and “literal” similarity of concepts and partially contiguity of the forms of signs (e.g. with specialization of meaning)
- (10) (“literal”) similarity of the forms of signs (e.g. with folk-etymology)
- (11) contiguity of the forms of signs (e.g. with blending, but also with morpheme deletion, shortening and symbolization)
- (12) “literal”, i.e. objectively visible, similarity and contiguity of concepts (e.g. with cohyponymic transfer)
- (13) “literal” similarity of referents and strong relation between contents of signs (e.g. with conceptual recategorization)
- (14) multiple associations (e.g. with certain forms of word-play)

The concrete associations can or cannot be incited by a model, which may be of Speaker’s own idiom or a foreign idiom.

The differentiation between models from Speaker’s own language vs. foreign models with both the cognitive-associative aspect and the formal aspect shows that loan influences cannot easily be included as a separate unique process in an overall scheme. Loan influence can become effective on various levels. Foreign influence of the cognitive-associative type triggers off (analogous) loan meaning on the perceptual level, and loan rendering and loan translation on the onomasiological level (and, as to loan translation, also on the onomatological level). Formal foreign influence comes up on the perceptual level in the form of full, true loans, morphological pseudo-loans or folk-etymological adaptations, on the onomatological level in the form of lexical pseudo-loans or semantic pseudo-loans and coinages with assumed foreignized material that accidentally also exists in the foreign language—for the correct classification of assumed pseudo-loans the knowledge of the chronological development is vital!), and

on the morphological level in the form of phonetic loans. (Loan creations and the so-called substituting loan meanings are not linguistic, but cultural loans and therefore have to be excluded as ghost phenomena in a linguistic terminology).

As has been illustrated, formal type (1a), semantic change, is often subclassified in traditional literature, based on the cognitive-associative bases of the onomasiological word-finding level. Deterioration and amelioration of meaning as well as litotes and hyperbole can all be applied to one of the types already mentioned so that they do not have to be seen as separate categories. The definition of metaphor and metonymy underlines that some instances of semantic change show a mixed character. The position of ellipsis is doubtful. It could theoretically only be regarded as semantic change in cases where the determinans is deleted; but then it is hard to distinguish from specialization of meaning. A subclassification parallel to the one of semantic changes can principally also be established for the other cases, which, in traditional literature, has only vaguely been done in connection with compounds (e.g. determinative vs. possessive compounds).

To provide all possibilities with separate terms seems unnecessary. It suffices to combine the above-mentioned formal and cognitive-associative processes in a scheme in which all naming processes can be localized (cf. end of the summaries). The figures correspond to the numbering chosen above, with the horizontal axis standing for the cognitive-associative bases and the vertical axis standing for the formal bases (n = non-intentional, i = intentional, o = based on a model in Speaker's own idiom [G. *eigensprachlich*], f = based on a model in a foreign idiom, m = based on a mixed model, - = not based on any model; the gray zones show the combinations that are excluded by definition).

Task 1: Look at the examples used in Chapter III and define their word-formation processes.

Task 2: Look at the examples used in Chapter IV and try to determine the forces for their coinages.

VI. Excursion: Historical Onomasiological Grammar and Historical Onomasiological Pragmatics

Onomasiology has started within the field of lexicology, but could also be extended to grammar and pragmatics (incl. text linguistics). And actually, some linguists do so.

An onomasiological question from the realm of grammar could be: “What are the expressions for past time in (the history of) the English verbal system?” The process that expressions are more and more deprived of their original, “lexical” meaning in favor of their grammatical “meaning” is called grammaticalization.

An onomasiological question from the realm of pragmatics, or text linguistics, could be: “What are the expressions for saluting somebody in English (language history)?” The iconemes, processes and forces in connection with the form of speech acts are basically the same as with “simple” words for “simple” concepts. For the development that expressions obtain a discursive, pragmatic function beside their “literal meaning” Karin Aijmer (1997) coined the term *pragmaticalization*; for processes where an expression that is used discursively and its “literal” sense loses its “literal” sense the term *discursization* has been used.

- Task 1: Tenses: What are the expressions for future time in English (language history) and in (the history of) other languages?
- Task 2: Have a look at studies on leave-taking terms (Grzega 2005b) and try to see how the observations hold true also for expressions not mentioned in these studies and for other languages.
- Task 3: Have a look at the history of address terms in English and other languages.
- Task 4: Look for the etymologies of *yes* and *yea* and the ones of *no* and *nay*. Why do we have two words for each function? Afterwards, compare these to the expressions for affirmation and negation in other languages. Do we find similar iconemes?
- Task 5: Describe the history of the following address terms: *sir*, *Mr.*, *ma(da)m*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, *Ms*. Explain when and why these terms came up.

Further Reading Recommendations for this Chapter

On the process of grammaticalization see Heine/Traugott (1991). On historical pragmatics see Aijmer (1997), Arnovick (1999) and Jucker/Fritz/Lebsanft (1999).

VII. Applied Historical Onomasiology

Being familiar with the ways how designations are coined, how they change their sound-shape, how they are replaced and why they are replaced can indeed render service to a number of concerns of the layperson. First of all, there seems to be a wide-spread interest, even among non-academic person, in the history of words and phrases, designations, designation changes, lexical similarities between languages and lexical differences between dialects.

Furthermore, in every speech community there is the phenomenon of linguistic criticism. This often includes discussions on the benefit and danger of foreign terms. Here, the historical onomasiologist might be able to solve myths, for instance that an elevated degree of borrowings result in the decay of a language. We now know that borrowing is a natural lexical process in every language and does not threaten a language at all. In fact, we may ask whether it is not rather the novelty of a word and not the foreignness of the word that causes negative emotions.

Historical onomasiologists are able to help solve other types of myths, too. **Example:** Some think that Mark Twain was a racist because he used the terms *nigger* and *negro* in his 19th-century novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and some American schools have even banned the book from school libraries. However, at the time he composed the novel these were normal “neutral” terms. Here, historical onomasiologists can help educators have a more historically conscious view on words.

This example also shows that historical onomasiologist can help people who have to translate older texts whose styles they should keep.

Historical onomasiologists can also be of help in other fields of the educational system. Due to their knowledge of phonetic and semantic changes, they are able to make acquiring English words more easy to learners with mother tongues related to English. They are able to show students that the change of a designation does not change the thing (or at least not automatically and necessarily)—this can be relevant in understanding sociopolitical rhetorics and marketing language.

Further, historical onomasiologists can help to warn of historically insensitive neologisms such as *herstory* (the first part in the Latinism *history* has nothing to do with the possessive pronoun *his*). On the other hand, historical onomasiologists can illustrate

that interpreting a word **only** in its historical sense might equally well lead to an historically insensitive view, e.g. a physician cannot be sued for calling himself *a doctor* although he doesn't have a doctor's degree (as long as he doesn't put a *Dr.* before or an *M.D.* after his name). History is always also a process.

Finally, historical onomasiologists may even help to mediate between people from different generations. The experience they get there may then also provide them with a better sensitivity for translating styles in general, including expert style into everyday style—which leads to one of the major target competences that learners should have acquired with these materials in order to be prepared for a knowledge society.

Project Suggestions

The following suggestions for projects can well be carried out in teams.

- Compare a conceptual field of your choice in two or more languages, in two or more varieties. Look at the name-giving processes and/or the factors triggering designations changes.
- Take all the entries under one letter from Buck, check the forces and illustrate the prominence of forces.
- Compare the designation for certain groups of people in various languages.
- Compare conceptual fields in various editions of Roget and see which designations were added and deleted over the years.
- Check in what aspects synonyms for a certain concept might not be totally interchangeable.
- Analyze how designations have changed in connection with political correctness.
- Analyze how designations have changed in connection with plain English movement.
- Take an academic text of your choice and produce various summaries for different audiences (colleagues, high-school students, general public). Test whether your versions have met the needs of the audiences.
- Write a Wikipedia article on a subject that you are well familiar with. Observe how the readers react to your choice of words and train your skills in expert-layperson communication.
- Compare the designations of antonymic concepts.

- Compare the designation of concepts in various music styles.
- Analyze how the realizations of a certain speech act have changed over the years.
- Compare different periods of time and analyze the indigenous coinages that people have suggested for foreign words.
- Check linguistic contributions in general newspapers and magazines and see how you would react to the contents keeping in mind the knowledge of historical onomasiology.
- Compare political rhetorics from different periods of time.

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