Level: Master One (Sciences of the Language)   Teacher: Dr. Betka Rezig Nadia

Course Three: Speech Production: Finding and Building Words

In the present lesson, we'll provide information on how words are retrieved from the mental lexicon for production.

Pauses, speech errors and tips of tongue can tell us about how we put our thoughts into words, this process is called 'Lexicalization'. There are two levels in this process: The first is the retrieval of the abstract form of a word-its Lemma- from the mental lexicon, based on the concept that the speaker wants to convey. The second stage is the specification of the form of the word (what it sounds like or how it is written or spelled). These two levels are respectively called: Finding words and Building words as shown in the following figure:
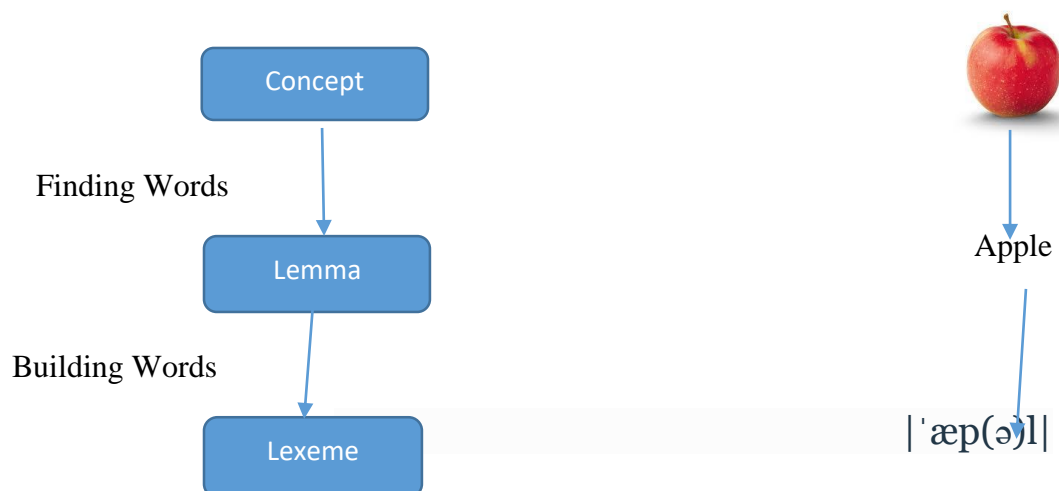
1- **Finding Words**

 1-1 Pausing and Predictability

The most important information as far as pausing is concerned is that pause patterns vary across the speech tasks because these tasks require different amount and type of planning. Concerning the retrieval of words from the mental lexicon,   speakers start with a general abstract idea of what they want to say and they need a linguistic expression for it, including finding the appropriate words. Words are not the same; there are words which are frequently used and others that fit for a specific topic or context better that others.

As a result of the frequency and predictability effect, we can say that some words are easier to retrieve than others so, if the retrieval is hard, it will require more time which is seen through the pause and the quick

retrieval of words results in greater fluency in speech. Pauses happen more before content words than functional words for this reason.

1-2 Speech Errors and Word Selection

What makes speech errors so interesting in psycholinguistics is that they are not random, their causes and mechanisms reveal the processes that are taking place in the speaker's brain.

There are three types of word selection errors presented in the following table:

Types of Word Errors		
Mis-selection	**Substitution** (one word replaces the other)	Keep the room harm (instead of warm)
	Blend (two words are merged)	Starking (starting and speaking)
Mis-ordering	**Anticipation**(a word appears earlier than intended)	I am not a candidate for a master degree. X I am not a master degree candidate.
	Perseveration (A word appears again later in the sentence)	A child is found in the school yard a child yesterday.
	Exchange (two words swap places)	Just piece a put of cake I it. X Just put a piece of cake in it.
Other	**Omission** (a word is left out)	It is an extremely interesting way to look things up It is an extremely way to look things up. X
	Addition (an extra word appears)	Ex: He behaved as like a fool.

These errors happen when words are semantically related or have similar sounds, antonyms and synonyms. One of the examples of speech errors are Freudian tongue slips which are claimed to reveal repressed thoughts and feelings. Ex: 'I wish you were her' instead of 'I wish you were here.'

2- **Building Words**

The components of a word that need to be fleshed out include its morphology and phonology. Words are made up of morphemes and the morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit. The word's phonology is the individual sounds or phonemes that make up the word.

2-1 Words and Rules

It is clear that regular forms (like 'ed' for the past tense and 's' for the plural form) are used in a rule-like way; because children learn the regular verbs and plurals before learning the irregular forms. The use of prefixes and suffixes as well is most of the time, regular. So, psycholinguists found out that we do not only find words but we also build words for the speech production and an example of this is the Tips of Tongue (TOT) that reveals that a speaker feels that he knows a given word or a part of it (for instance, the ending) but takes some time to say it fully.

3-The Left Hemisphere and Words Retrieval

Left hemisphere dominance for language has been consistently confirmed in clinical and experimental settings and constitutes one of the main axioms of neurology and neuroscience, In the 1860s, independent reports by Paul Broca and Gustave Dax indicated that speech output processes (referred to as "articulated language") appeared to be left lateralized. The left lateralization of language functioning was then extended to language comprehension by Wernicke, who showed that a lesion in the superior left temporal lobe could be associated with a loss of what was referred to as "speech-specific sound images".