

I Will Wow You!

Pragmatic Interjections Revisited

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Abstract: This study sets out to focus on the nature of changes some major interjections have gone through. To achieve this end, different processes of word formation and semantic change are put under scrutiny. In this vein, the significant role of frequency and the gradual movement of these changes are underscored. Additionally, the study demonstrates how what is generally known as reanalysis can account for functional shifts. The study also touches upon what is usually described as innovation.

Key words: Innovation; Interjection; Reanalysis; Semantic change.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, interjections have been regarded as marginal to language. Latin grammarians described them as non-words, independent of syntax, signifying only feelings or states of mind (Wharton, 2003). Nineteenth-century linguists regarded them as paralinguistic, even non-linguistic phenomena. They believed that “between interjection and word there is a chasm wide enough to allow us to say that interjection is the negation of language” (Benfey, 1869, p. 295), or that “language begins where interjections end” (Müller, 1862, p. 366). Accordingly, interjections have been regarded as the words or phrases that have expressive functions or, in other words, are mostly used to express the speaker’s feelings or emotions. There are also other words or word combinations which are regarded as interjections since they have an expressive function; these words originally belong to the category of nouns or adjectives. Whatever their meanings outside the interjectional use are, as interjections, such words express the immediate feelings of the speaker.

Traditional classification of interjections to *primary* and *secondary* might help us to narrow down our focus. In keeping with this classification, the words from other word classes (e.g., *hell*, *boy*, and *Jesus*), when used as interjections, construct the category of secondary interjections, and all the other interjections that have already appeared in the dictionary such as *wow*, *oops*, *ouch*, *yuck*, and *whoa* form the primary group. The latter interjections are, in point of fact, emotion-expressive so much so that they cannot be expressed by means of other words or phrases. Ameka (1992) contends that both types of interjections are syntactically independent in that they can constitute an utterance by themselves, and are only loosely

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integrated into the grammar of the clause containing them. Furthermore, Ameka continues, interjections always constitute an intonation unit by themselves.

However, when primary interjections do not appear in their traditional places and start to have different content categories, they, semantically and functionally speaking, cannot be considered as interjections anymore. Hence, in this paper we will try to, first, provide evidence for the falsity of the common definition of primary interjections; second, to elaborate on the processes which were at work for such changes to occur; and, finally, to predict the movements of these interjections toward their formal occurrence in dictionaries as new entries.

PRIMARY INTERJECTIONS

In recent written and especially informal spoken texts, primary interjections perform functions other than merely expressing feelings or states of mind (Li, 2005). These primary interjections are changing their parts of speech in rather unpredictable ways and thus carry a range of meanings that was never previously part of their interjectional meaning.

Recent scholarship on interjections brings forth cases and examples that are not in keeping with Ameka's generally accepted definition of primary interjections. Ameka (1992, p. 111) defines primary interjections as "words that cannot be used in any other sense than as an interjection." He further states that "these items are non-productive in the sense that they do not inflect and are not movable between word-classes." Such a view can, however, be challenged by the following examples:

- A. Five **ouch** moments of all time!
- B. Don't talk to him! He's a **yuck**!
- C. I live with a vampire, and he hasn't had **an oops** moment once.
- D. How many Xanax did I take? I think I **oopsed**!

As the examples make manifest, these interjections are not meeting the criteria characteristic of primary interjections; they have become movable between word classes; they have taken different parts of speech; and, finally, they have been inflected and therefore they are not unproductive anymore. Therefore, these examples can be employed to refute the common conceptualist (Wharton, 2003) definition of primary interjections (see also, Greenbuam, 2000).

A significant distinction, however, should be made between interjections that serve an emotion-expressive role in a sentence but seem to have appeared as other parts of speech and interjections that have changed their content categories. The former are cases where interjections are preceded by verbs *go* and *say* or adjective *like*. This group hinges on the intonation and pronunciation of their original interjectional forms and the required gesture. Consider these examples:

- E. I was like **huh**?
- F. She went like **whoa**!
- G. Guys would look at this thing and go **yuck**! You use that!
- H. And they go **oops**, oops, we made a mistake!

In all these cases, interjections have been used to describe the feelings of the speaker at the time the utterance is expressed. They have been employed because finding another word whereby the same meaning can be expressed seems to be difficult. It is somehow challenging to replace these interjections with their synonyms and arrive at the same effect in terms of emotion and spontaneity. As noted by Cruz (2009), it is impossible to find appropriate contextual synonyms for many interjections or to paraphrase them.

In light of the aforementioned explanations, Kaplan (cited in Wharton, 2003) addresses, inter alia, the linguistic difference between *I feel pain* and *ouch*. To account for the difference, he introduces the notions of *descriptive* and *expressive* content. In this vein, while *I feel pain* has descriptive (truth-conditional/propositional) content, *ouch* has expressive (non-truth conditional/non-propositional)

content. This descriptive/expressive distinction, thus, supports the assumption that *ouch* and *I feel pain* are not interchangeable. The following examples clarify the point even further:

- I.
- a. Ouch! I feel pain.
- b. I feel pain, I feel pain.

This observation also pertains to the interjections in [5]-[8]. Yet, taking Kaplan's (1977) point of view into account, one cannot help but suspect that *five ouch moments of all time*, apart from changes on the surface, has also undergone a shift from an expressive content to a descriptive one. *Ouch* which is used to express pain in Kaplan's term is now used to modify another noun. Functionally speaking, *I feel pain*, describes the feeling of the speaker *I*. Similarly, *ouch* in *ouch moments* sheds light on the nature of *moments*.

It is therefore due to this shift that in [10] the adjectival form of *ouch* is interchangeable with other adjectives like *painful*. *Ouch* takes the role of an adjective and an adjective can be replaced with its synonyms with only a slight meaning change. As such, [10a] can also be expressed as [10b].

- J.
- a. Five *ouch* moments of all time
- b. Five *painful* moments of all time.

Interjections retain an element of naturalness and spontaneity (Wharton, 2003). This implies the reason underlying such changes. Human beings try to make their speech sound as natural and spontaneous as possible. As such, it is not surprising to see cases where these interjections function as other parts of speech to make the conversation sound more familiar or tangible. Besides, speakers try to make use of the fastest and easiest ways to send their messages across; and since sentences in a conversation usually come rather spontaneously, these interjections appear to be among the first choices the speakers make.

However, before we move on to the analysis of these interjections, we will focus on the history and origin of the most frequently used interjection: *wow!*

WOW!

Taking the Webster dictionary as our trusted source as regards the accepted meaning of interjections, we define the interjection *wow* as follows:

An interjection used to express strong feelings, pleasure/surprise.

Considering the frequency of this interjection in daily speech, we can easily add other strong feelings that are expressed with the help of this interjection. Examples are:

- K. *Wow!* You're here!
- L. *Wow!* That's outrageous!
- M. *Wow!* That's disgusting!
- N. *Wow!* This gift is beautiful!

In fact, along with the feeling of pleasure and surprise, we can add delight, outrage, disgust and wonder to the range of meanings that *wow* can express. Yet, as Wharton (2003) explains, the meaning of *wow* cannot be rigorously defined. He argues that the range of communicative effects of an utterance of *wow*, when combined with different intonations and facial expressions, can become too many. "Paralinguistic phenomena such as tone of voice, or even non-linguistic behavior, what a speaker might communicate by using an affective tone of voice, a facial expression or gesture may also convey a lot when the interjection *wow* is uttered" (Wharton 2003, p. 46).

To clarify, when eating a bowl of salty soup, one may with a facial expression and a gesture say *Wow!* *Wow* in this example could mean *yuck*, or *argh*; yet, the intended meaning is grasped by the use of these

paralinguistic phenomena and the context. As Cuenca (2000) notes, interjections are sensitive to context in that they can only be interpreted in relation with the context which has given rise to them.

However, what is important in all the examples above is that *wow* as an interjection only shows what the *speaker* is actually feeling. Put differently, interjections are expressive words or phrases that show the state of mind, or feelings of the speaker at a particular moment.

Looking back at the history of *wow*, one could observe that its first appearance as an interjection was around 1513 as it is confirmed in the Webster dictionary, but about four centuries later one finds *wow* as a noun and only later as a verb capable of being inflected like any other verb with its own preposition and functions. The examples are:

- O. It was one big **wow**.
- P. She **wowed** the audience by her performance.
- Q. I am going to **wow** you *with* my food.

As the examples show, *wow* expresses meanings that do not involve the natural, spontaneous feelings of the speaker like pleasure, delight, or wonder. Accordingly, *wow* in the above examples is not an interjection anymore. Bearing in mind the fact that interjections can constitute utterances in their own right in a unique non-elliptical manner (Wharton, 2003), one can claim that in [11]-[14] the interjection *wow* has no doer of an action. Additionally, the *wow* mentioned in [16] and [17] has now changed in such a way that as a verb it has received two arguments:

She wowed **the audience** by her performance!
Agent experiencer

Put differently, the doer did something so spectacular that made the experiencer say *wow*! This is a dramatic change. Functionally speaking, *wow* as a verb puts the focus on the addressee not the addresser. As such, this is no longer the speaker who is expressing his feelings; rather, this time it is the addressee who will say *wow*! In other words, this time the *wow* expressed by the addressee in reaction to the addresser's success is considered as an interjection. Put more precisely:

- A: I'm going to *wow* you with my food. A causes B to say *wow*.
 - B: (having tasted the food) Wow!! It is great!
- Wow* in B is an interjection.

Along these lines, as one of the primary interjections, *wow* contradicts all the current definitions of primary interjections by having the noun and verb forms stemming from it. Although from one interjection two new forms have been constructed, this is not the end. The process involved in the formation of these new forms is still taking advantage of the popularity of the interjection *wow* resulting in the production of its adjectival form as well. However, this new form is not officially established and has not yet appeared in some dictionaries. Nonetheless, its high use in daily conversations cannot be denied. *Wow* as an adjective brings about examples like this:

- R. We are taking care of different areas including the **wow** factors.
- S. He calls the ceremony the *wow* moment of his career.

The fact that despite the institutionalization of *wow* as noun and verb, the adjectival form is also made by the speakers hints at the productive nature of interjections.

ANALYSIS

Scholars usually list various types or categories of semantic change. Even so, among several processes of word formation and semantic change, we limit our focus only to *conversion* as this process seems to be the most suitable one to account for the changes within the scope of interjections. It represents functional shift (Bauer, 1983) from one category to another.

Brinton and Traugott (2005) define conversion as typically involving derivation from one major class item to another. They believe that in English conversion is usually equated with zero derivation. This definition of conversion is related to changes in interjections. However, Brinton and Traugott also present another definition of conversion that does not explain the changes under our focus. This time conversion implies a shift from a minor to a major word class (e.g., *to up*). They argue that "though this shift results in greater 'lexicality' in the sense of more contentful meaning and membership of a major class, it is a shift better understood as the word formation process of conversion because it is instantaneous and the meaning derived by conversion is predictable" (p. 97). They note that it is the prediction of the new word from the old form that counts as an example of conversion.

Along these lines, we will argue that although it is the association of the new word with its old and original use that helps the addressee to comprehend the new uses of these interjections, such association of meanings is not enough to make these changes examples of conversion. What is meant is that, despite the existence of an association, the new word, semantically speaking, is still not predictable from the original meaning of the interjection. For instance, upon hearing the sentence *I just yucked in the bucket in the basement*, we could immediately notice that the verb *yuck* does not deal with something pleasant. Its intended meaning (*to vomit*), however, is not easily predictable; it needs to be understood by the context. Hence, prediction cannot be applied to our case.

Based on the observation that *wow* as a noun has appeared earlier than its verb form, one can ask: Is it plausible to claim that the shift of *wow* from noun to verb is an example of conversion?

N>V. *wow* as N. → *wow* as V.

As Brinton and Traugott (2005) say, conversion of N>V is constrained by salient semantic and use-based characteristics of the parent noun, such as location, agent, and instrument. For example, *to bottle* is to put something in a bottle, *to mine* is to remove something from a mine, *to water* is to pour water somewhere, and *to hammer* is to use a hammer as an instrument. Likewise, we can claim that *to wow* means to cause someone to say *wow*. However, in none of above-mentioned examples, the converted form receives an experiencer. In other words, *to wow* means to make somebody else say *wow*. In addition, the structure of noun and verb forms of *wow* is somewhat different from other examples of noun-to-verb conversion. *To wow* does not mean to make someone say *wow* (as a noun); *to wow* means to make somebody verbalize the interjection *wow*.

REANALYSIS

Fortson (2004) believes that many changes that cannot be classified according to the traditional classificatory scheme are readily understandable as reanalysis. As it was observed above, the traditional process of conversion could not be used to account for the minor shifts or to incorporate all aspects of the changes interjections have gone through. As such, we argue that reanalysis can lay bare the changes within interjections and thus account for the observed functional shifts. Therefore, we base our discussion of reanalysis on the following definitions: Langacker (1977) defines reanalysis as change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation.

Another core definition is that of Fortson's (2004, p. 3), who characterizes reanalysis as follows: "If one deduces a different underlying form or rule for producing something that a speaker or the speakers round about are producing, then one has made a reanalysis." He is of the opinion that reanalysis rests crucially on meanings *not* being available; the word was without meaning to the learner until one was assigned. Later in his article, he notes that upon encountering the phrase *he harked* used after a quote meaning 'he shouted, exclaimed', he had a hard time subsuming this change under any of the traditional rubrics. As such, he contends that any person versed in probably the most familiar use of *hark*, will immediately have a sense of how this change has come about. He believes that in this example one can speculate as to the exact associations that led the speaker to the sense *shout* or *exclaim*. However, the point, as he states, is that, as no

traditional category of change can account for this example, it is simply a reanalysis. Such an interpretation strongly corresponds to our case. Consider this example:

T. We made our *oops*, though.

What is of utmost importance in understanding the meaning of this example is not the original meaning of *oops* but the association one can and (should) make between the old use of the word and the new meaning in the context. Put differently, following Fortson's example, our familiarity with where and how interjection *oops* is used and expressed, helps us to automatically associate the interjectional use of *oops* with the new form and thereby to assign a new meaning to the noun form. *Oops* as a noun correlates with mistakes and wrongdoings and is thus interpreted as: *We made surprising mistakes, though.*

Following the aforementioned definitions and the fact that language is made anew and in different ways by individuals (Fortson, 2004), we can easily make a sentence like this:

U. If you do not listen to me, I will *ouch* you!

By changing the content category to a verb from, we highlight the feelings that will be expressed by the addressee. This means that we have shifted the focus away from the speaker to the addressee. Therefore, *ouch* in this example is not emotion-expressive and does not deal with the speaker; rather it intends to perform an action to make the addressee be emotion-expressive by producing the interjection *ouch*. The new word at this stage has no particular meaning assigned to it; however, the process of reanalysis helps us to make an association between the new word and the original use. In fact, it is the image of *ouch* as an interjection and its mostly negative connotation which make the new form comprehensible.

Reanalysis makes clear how old and new forms are handled, predominantly when it comes to the ultimate comprehension of new words. But, there still remain two important questions: What is lost and what is gained through these changes? Can reanalysis explain them as well? To arrive at a satisfactory answer, we will have a brief study on the most dominant changes of interjections, i.e., change in content category and meaning.

The change in the content category of interjections can be as follows:

Interj. → N. Interj. → V. Interj. → Adj.

This process can be explained by what Hopper (1992, p. 22) calls "decategorialization" or the process whereby forms "lose or neutralize the morphological markers and syntactic privileges characteristic of the full categories noun and verb, and . . . assume attributes characteristic of secondary categories such as adjective, participle, preposition, etc." In most of the examples above, we observe a change from one category to another; however, due to the fact that we have both a verb and a noun stemming from one interjection, we can claim that our movement has a somewhat opposite direction compared to the definition of decategorialization.

As interjections, like nouns, verbs and adjectives, are among open word classes, there is no movement from a full category to a secondary one; rather, interjections are moving within the scope of one word class. In other words, they are moving from one subcategory of open class to another. But, as Brinton and Traugott (2005) put it, decategorialization may occur in certain kinds of word formation such as conversion and compounding, or in processes that pave the way for lexicalization.

As discussed by Brinton and Traugott (2005, p. 107), "decategorializations are particular subtypes of the much larger mechanism of change known as reanalysis." This substantiates the view that the process known as reanalysis deals with changes in the structure of expressions; such changes certainly imply shifts in the content category.

In this vein, apart from an obvious shift in the surface form of interjections, there is also a deep semantic change that takes the interpretation of these new words away from their original interjectional meaning. In order to account for these semantic shifts, we should have a look at the various and most frequent meanings of interjections as shown in Table 1:

Table 1*

Wow: Interj.	Used to express: surprise, wonder, amazement, delight, disgust, outrage
Wow: V.	To impress, especially by performance To excite to enthusiastic admiration or approval
Wow: N.	Striking success, hit
Wow: Adj.	impressive, striking, surprising/ed, delighted/ing
Oops: Interj.	Used to express mild apology, surprise, dismay
Oops: N.	mistake, screw-up
Oops: Adj.	embarrassingly wrong,
Oops: V.	to make an unexpected mistake, to screw things up
Yuck: Interj.	Used to express rejection, disgust, revulsion
Yuck: Adj.	Something disgusting, gross
Yuck: N.	Something disgusting, someone unpopular, smelly, ugly, gross
Yuck: V.	To vomit, to make a place dirty
Ouch: Interj.	Used to express sudden pain
Ouch: Adj.	Painful, hurting

The most significant observation based on these interjections is that when interjections change their parts of speech they are only associated with one of their many possible meanings. This begs the following question: Did these interjections lose some of their original meanings or did they gain an additional one?

The notion of loss and gain is also prevalent in the process of reanalysis. The most consequent implementation of the loss-and-gain picture in a general theory of reanalysis has been proposed by Langacker (1977), who suggests that instances of loss and gain can be traced to the word level. His studies are guided by the assumption that word meanings imply clusters of atomic meanings. Semantic reanalysis occurs where some such atomic meanings get lost while others are newly integrated to the word meaning. To illustrate the notion of loss and gain, consider the following example:

V. Don't talk to him! He's a yuck!

Yuck in [22] does not deal with features characteristic of interjections, i.e., it is neither dealing with emotions and feelings of the speaker, nor is a reaction to something gross or disgusting; rather, it is used to describe someone. *Yuck* in this example is used to describe the characteristics of the person *he* not his *emotions*. Anyone aware of the negative meaning of the interjection *yuck* can associate the new word with its original interjectional use and arrive at the conclusion that *yuck* is a term used for someone who has a rather unpleasant look. Thus, embarking on the original use of the interjection *yuck*, we can easily decode its new and intended meaning as:

Don't talk to him; he is unpopular, ugly or despised!

*Although interjections in this table are restricted to *wow*, *oops*, *yuck*, and *ouch*, other examples of interjections can be found to have undergone such shifts too. For example: Don't *shh* me, young men!

To put it differently, if we have an iota of familiarity with the interjectional meaning of *yuck* and where and when it is used, we can argue that upon hearing a statement like *he's a yuck*, we will never relate *yuck* with positive connotations. Certainly, *yuck* brings its negative connotation along, but its exact meaning is understood from the preceding and unfolding context.

Therefore, the changes in the category and meaning of these interjections end in a kind of meaning gain. It also lessens some other emotion-expressive meanings of the original interjectional forms. More precisely, although among the many possible meanings expressed by the interjection *yuck* some have lost their significance, the meanings are not totally lost. This is due to the fact that there might be occasions where the noun form of *yuck* is used to refer to something gross. A case in point is [23]:

W. Vinegar is yuck.

On the whole, it is the speaker that makes the choice as what that particular word in that particular situation could mean. This is in line with Langacker's (1977) definition of reanalysis according to which the word should be viewed as denoting a cluster of concepts. These concepts, however, do not contribute to the overall meaning in a feature-like fashion but the semantic concepts themselves can be activated to different degrees in some given utterance. The new words can convey clusters of meaning too. For instance, *yuck* in the adjective form can suggest various meanings stemming from its interjectional use but through continued pragmatic inferencing, new semantic concepts may enter the cluster (e.g., ugly and/or unpopular). First, they are only minimally active but, over time, become more active. At the same time, notions like disgust and grossness are down-tuned (Eckardt, 2006).

Therefore, at this stage, although interjections encounter a shift in their category and start to have more lexicality and content in terms of their most dominant use and meaning, it is not yet possible to suddenly terminate the connection between their original use and new meaning. If the association of the new and old form were lost, our examples would be included under the rubric of lexicalization; however, most of the examples that have been observed in this paper have not yet reached the level where upon hearing their verb or noun form, one would not make the association between the interjectional use and the new meaning of the word.

Consequently, reanalysis accounts for these changes in the following fashion. In order for the new utterance to be understood, the interpreter derives a hypothetical new language system. As Eckardt (2006, 2007) observes, this narrow conception of reanalysis does not rest on creative intentions of the speaker; rather, it is the hearer who hypothesizes a second possible syntactic/semantic analysis.

However, it goes without saying that the speaker makes his utterance under the assumption that the interpreter will have enough presupposition (Eckardt, 2006, 2007) to accommodate it. As an interpretive alternative, the interpreter hypothesizes a new message, leading to reanalysis. In order for the hypothesis to be supported, it is essential to have enough presupposition. For instance, upon the first appearance of *wow* as a noun, the interpreters presumably enjoyed adequate presupposition concerning its interjectional use, meaning and connotations which led into the association of the old and new meanings in the new context and thereby a reanalysis.

Similarly, if the meaning of an interjection is not known to the interpreters, comprehending the new form which originates from that unknown interjection would be implausible. In other words, if the interjection "*aakh*"³ is taken from Persian to an English context and is reanalyzed into an adjectival form, comprehending its meaning would be very difficult for the English speakers as they do not have enough background knowledge.

Reanalysis makes manifest two important characteristics of changes that, if taken into consideration, can predict the development of these new forms in the future:

- A. Considering the history of *wow*, we are not sure if the first movement from an interjection to its noun and verb form was gradual. However, the change of *wow* to an adjective and the fact that, despite its high frequency in daily conversations, it has not yet been included in several dictionaries, hints at the slowness of these changes.

³ *Aakh* is the equivalent of *ouch* in Persian.

- B. The occurrence of just one single shift is not sufficient to make a word change. For conventionalization to happen, these reanalyzed interjections need to be used by a certain number of speakers in different contexts.

Overall, these interjections are understood by an association between the old use and new forms. Nevertheless, there are utterances which include interjections as one of their components, but their meaning cannot be understood through association. This loss of connection brings about another process known as lexicalization.

LEXICALIZATION

Kastovsky (1982, pp. 164-165) defines lexicalization as "the integration of a word formation or syntactic construction into the lexicon with semantic and/or formal properties which are not completely derivable or predictable from the constituents or the pattern of formation." Besides, Lipka (2002, p. 111) defines lexicalization as "the phenomenon that a complex lexeme once coined tends to become a single complete lexical unit, a simple lexeme. Through this process it loses the character of a syntagma to a greater or lesser degree." Drawing on these two definitions, Brinton and Traugott (2005), put forward this one:

Lexicalization is the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use a syntactic construction or word formation as a new contentful form with formal and semantic properties that are not completely derivable or predictable from the constituents of the construction or the word formation pattern. Over time there may be further loss of internal constituency and the item may become more lexical. (p. 96)

However, while it is the association between the original use of the interjection and the new form that makes the new word comprehensible, such a definition cannot explain the shifts in all interjections. In lexicalization this association is lost. Put more accurately, loss of such associations or the internal consistency is how the new word becomes an example of lexicalization. As an example, although *oops* as a noun is new to the inventory (Lehmann, 2002, p. 14), its meaning is well derived from its original interjectional use and this is, in fact, how it is understood. Therefore, while the original use does not make the new words predictable in terms of their specific and context-related meanings, it greatly improves the comprehension of the new forms.

In this vein, the process of lexicalization is not observed and applied at this stage. The process of lexicalization, however, can be observed in other cases of interjectional changes where the internal consistency of the new and old forms is totally lost and thereby some novel and rather informal phrases are invented with interjection as one of their components. Examples include:

X. "Ha ha, you just fell down into a pile of rubbish!" "Yeah, yeah, **yuck it up.**"

Y. Simone has a **yuck-mouth.**

Z. Who do you call to fix it? **The Oops Squad!**

Example [24] is a remarkable case of lexicalization as understanding the meaning of the whole utterance from the individual elements seems to be difficult. Therefore, the phrase should be learned regardless of the interjection which is present there. The phrasal verb *yuck up*, cannot under any circumstances be semantically related to the interjection *yuck*. As such, it is not an example of reanalysis but a good case of lexicalization. Nevertheless, the other two cases can be examples of another process, not different from lexicalization, known as innovation.

INNOVATION

As Brinton and Traugott (2005, p. 45, original emphasis) state, "when first used for a particular occasion, an innovation is known as a NONCE WORD or NONCE FORMATION." A nonce formation is a new

complex word coined on the spur of the moment. A nonce word is formed by applying regular word formation rules and therefore must be understood within its context.

Examples [24]-[26] can also be regarded as nonce words. The reason why they have appeared in the English lexicon seems to have been provided by Bussmann (1996). He argues that nonce words serve an immediate communicative need of, or solve a problem for, the speaker, whether it be economizing, filling in a conceptual/lexical gap, or creating a stylistic effect.

Similar to changes in reanalyzed interjections, when a nonce form is accepted by part or all of the speech community or is institutionalized, it becomes a new word. In this vein, [24]-[26] are examples of nonce words which have been accepted by other speakers as known lexical items. They, therefore, hint at institutionalization. At the institutionalized stage, a word is created by productive processes and is listed with its full derivational history, but over time various features are lost; the word diverges from the expected pattern in unpredictable ways and begins to behave as if it were a "monomorphemic entity" (Bauer 1992, p. 566). This process has taken place in "*yuck sth up*" as there is no association between the verb and the interjection. Consequently, two kinds of process can be imagined:

a.Reanalysis: where the association of old use and new meanings is required for the word to be comprehended.

b.Innovation: where the internal consistency between the new word and its possible old meaning is lost and the word is understood separately from its original form.

CONCLUSION

Interjections are taking a new direction in informal conversations; they are used as other parts of speech too. Yet, the bottom line is that there are only a limited number of primary interjections that lend themselves well to such changes. When uttered, these interjections conjure up an image in the mind of the addressee; this image is more often than not boosted by the facial expressions that accompany the interjections.

Yet, as noted by Cruz (2009), while interjections can and do refer to something related to the speaker or to the external world, their referential process is not the same as that of the lexical items which belong to the grammatical categories.

Some interjections, however, better allude to the external world. For example *eh*, *oh*, and *ow* have, as primary interjections, different kinds of reference than *oops*, *yuck*, and *wow*. This is verifiably why it is rare to find examples of *eh* or *oh* used as, say, verbs. As such, interjections with stronger reference to the external world seem to be the best candidates for reanalysis.

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