

Semantic and lexical change: Examples

- (1) What did these words mean in earlier times? Use the OED online and look at the dates on the usage examples.

dog

girl

popular

fantastic

native

juvenile

- (2) Old English *cniht* 'boy, servant' > 'servant' > 'military servant'
> 'warrior in service of the king' > 'lesser nobility'

- (3) Japanese examples from the WWWJDIC online dictionary

- (a) *omae* お前 (pn,adj-no) (1) (fam) (male) you (formerly honorific, now sometimes derog. term referring to an equal or inferior)
- (b) *kisama* 貴様 (pn,adj-no) (1) (sens) (derog) you; you bastard; you son of a bitch; (2) (arch) (pol) you

- (4) Words for 'telephone' — how did languages get words for this?

- (a) Borrowing or calquing (a calque is a 'loan translation' using existng morphemes)
- (b) Semantic change
- German: *Fern+sprecher* 'far+speaker' / *Telefon*
 - Japanese: *den+wa* 'electric+talk'
 - the morphemes used for this were originally borrowed from Chinese
 - Chinese: *dien+hua* 'electric+talk' — actually calqued right back from Japanese!
 - Icelandic: *sími*; used to mean 'string/thread'
 - Russian: телефон