

Semantic Roles of English Language Teaching Derivational Suffixes

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 07 Jan

Accepted: 18 Feb

Volume: 3

Issue: 1

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the roles of the suffixes in English and to identify similarities and contrasts in the semantic functions of suffixes in the English language. Descriptive qualitative research and linguistic approach were the methods employed in this study. The findings of this study show that: (1) English suffixes follow the stem and create a new derivative in a different part of speech or word by altering the lexico-grammatical meaning of the word; and (2) There are four different kinds of suffixes in English: nominal, verbal, adjective, and adverbial.

KEYWORDS: Semantic Roles, Derivational Suffixes

1. Introduction

The English language is constantly absorbing, blending, compounding, inflecting, and deriving new lexical elements. Word formation is the broad name for this process, although native speakers of the language almost ever give it any thought. According to Laurie Bauer (1983), the study of English word production is a field of linguistics that is "currently a confused one" and "of central interest to theoretical linguistics" (p. 1). He blamed this misunderstanding on the absence of accepted terminology in the area, and a quick scan of recent research suggests that the issue of just what constitutes a word has not yet been fully resolved (Bauer 1983; Brinton 2000; Plag 2003).

In fact, while reading through different grammars and word-formation books, one encounters terminology like lexeme, orthographic word, and grammatical word, which are but a few examples of the "subtle ambiguities" (Plag, 2003, p. 9) included in the more general term word.

This work, however, aims to analyze a crucial agent in English word-formation, the derivational suffix, rather than to argue for a definition of the term word. The forms of those derivational suffixes that provide new nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that are most and least productive along with a brief analysis of the constraints that have been outlined, after a quick overview of the notions of production and restrictions. This topic is obviously relevant to English language teachers: deducing word meaning from morphological structure in order to achieve word comprehension is a reasonable and effective learning strategy, as deducing a word's meaning from its context or from dictionary definitions sometimes results in misunderstanding (Bertram, Laine & Virkkala, 2000).

Language instructors should be able to identify the highly productive category of word-forming morphemes that comprise derivative suffixes for their pupils. Consequently, this can assist such students in developing into self-sufficient learners, empowering them to work autonomously toward the methodical decoding of morphemes to interpret new lexical items.

Semantic Function of Derivational Suffixes:

Similar debates about defining words have been brought up in discussions of derivational suffixes (Bauer, 1983; Hay, 2002; Plag & Baayen, 2009). The idea of productivity is relevant to this topic. Plag (2003) explores the concepts of a potential word and an actual word, pointing out that "some affixes can easily be used to coin new words while other affixes can't" (p. 44). Productivity, according to him, is "the ability of an affix to be used to coin new complex words" (p. 44). According to Bauer (1983), non-productive suffixes are those that can create whole words from a limited, recognized, and established list of bases. Depending on the source cited, there seems to be a minor variation in the productivity of various suffixes to generate new lexical items. The suffix -th is one of the most often mentioned non-productive suffixes in word-formation literature.

According to Bauer & Huddleston (2002), p. 1704, this suffix is lexically conditioned, meaning that its application is so restricted that "the possibility to take -th must be listed with each individual lexical item that has this possibility" (Plag, 2003, p. 36). Nouns that are de-adjectival and de-verbal, like "warmth" or "birth," are formed with this suffix. According to Hay (2002), "one of the most debated problems of English morphology" is defining the stacking limits that apply to derivational suffixes (and affixes in general) (p. 527). For example, a native speaker immediately understands that *successfullyful is not allowed; instead, -ly must come after -ful in order for the word to form correctly. However, it is far more difficult to prescriptively define these stacking limits for the variety of suffix-root combinations than it is to make snap decisions as a native speaker. Stacking constraints are a further idea that is considered in connection to suffixes. The topic of "whether there are general principles or mechanisms that constrain the combinatorial properties of affixes" has been discussed for a long time, as Plag & Baayen (2009) point out. In fact, not every suffix can attach to every base; instead, the combinatorial options rely on the base's phonological, morphological, semantic, or syntactic characteristics (Plag & Baayen, 2009). For example, Bauer and Huddleston (2002) state that the nominalizing suffixes -ancy and -ency are limited because they only attach to adjectives ending in -ant and -ent when they are in a paradigmatic connection (p. 1705), such as when we derive vacancy from unoccupied.

Semantic Function of Morphological Suffixes:

The main morphological element that creates new words from preexisting ones is a suffix (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002). The renowned linguist Edward Sapir is credited by St. Clair, Monaghan, and Ramscar (2009) for his investigation into the general suffixing preferences in world languages with the suggestion that, rather than prefixing or infixing, "morphemes that modify either the grammatical or semantic properties of words to attach to the end" (p. 1318). Suffixes may, in fact, alter a word in four different ways: phonological, orthographic, semantic, and word class alterations. The following are some instances of suffixation that cause these modifications (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002, p. 1675; Brinton, 2000, p. 86):

Phonologic: locative > location, produce > production

Orthographic: commit > committal, sad > sadness

Semantic: deliver > delivery

Word Class: use > useful > usefully

From now on, emphasis will be placed on suffixation that modifies word class and semantic meaning. The complexity of the hierarchies used to classify these class-changing prefixes varies throughout the literature studied for this research.

Semantic Function of Nominal Suffixes:

To create nouns, nominal suffixes are appended to noun, verb, or adjective bases. For instance, the word kindness, which means "the state or quality of being kind," is created by taking the adjective kind and adding the suffix -ness, which means "the state or quality of being X." According to Plag (2003), this suffix and its semantic sister -ity "can attach to practically any adjective," making it the most productive in the English language (p. 92). Conversely, it has been demonstrated that the nominal suffix -dom is marginally productive in English, despite being believed to be nonproductive a century ago (Bauer, 1983). Nominal suffixes like as diminutives and gender-marking suffixes can significantly alter the semantic meaning. Diminutives are used to convey a speaker's or writer's emotional attitude toward the base as well as diminutive size, informality, likeness, and imitation (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002; Plagi, 2003). Examples include darling, which is a term of love, and -let and -ling, as in piglet and duckling, where the suffixes signify a little pig and a small duck. Suffixes like -ie or -y also denote emotional commitment. These are used when referring to someone as sweetie or dearie, or when renaming William as Willie instead of William. Suffixes that indicate gender include -ette and -ess. To create feminine nouns from human nouns indicating professional rank, the initial suffix, -ess, is added (Bauer, 1983); for example, the female forms of waiter and actor are, respectively, waitress and actress. According to Bauer (1983), -ess is

highly prolific (although feminist criticism has slightly reduced its productivity). Additionally, -ette gives -ess some semantic "competition" (p. 221) when forming female-marked nouns.

Semantic Function of Adverbial Suffixes:

The three suffixes -ly, -ward, and -wise are the most effective in deriving adverbs (Bauer, 1983). Adverbs derived from nouns by the suffix -wise are classified into two classes by Plag (2003): manner/dimension adverbs and perspective adverbs. Adverbs ending in -wise indicate "in the manner of X, like X" in manner/dimension adverbs, such as "They moved in a clockwise manner." Adverbs of viewpoint that finish in -wise are less useful since they imply "with respect to, in regard to, concerning X," as in Healthwise. According to Bauer (1983), the suffix -ly can also be added rather effectively to adjectives to create adverbs, as in the case of greedily derived from greedy. Phonological constraints apply to the attachment of adverbial -ly, and these constraints include the attachment to adjectives that have already ended.

Semantic Function of Verbal Suffixes:

Two suffixes—-ify and -ize—are the main ways that verbs are formed from nouns and adjectives, according to Bauer (1983). Verbs are formed from adjectives with the meaning "to make X," much as when we generate simple from complex (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002). The semantic impact somewhat changes to "to make into X" when verbs are formed from noun bases, as in the case of mummify from mommy. Although this suffix has not historically been used to create many words, Bauer and Huddleston (2002) note that it is still useful in creating new words; they provide the example yuppify to illustrate this productivity. The abbreviation yuppie, which is ingeniously coupled with the suffix -ie, is a relatively new addition to the English vernacular. However, according to Bauer (1983), the suffix -ize is more useful than -ify since it adds meanings such as "to render into X," "to convert into X," or "to subject to X," as in "terrorize" or "civilize." When Bauer and Huddleston (2002) state that this suffix is the subject of "prescriptive criticism" (p. 1715) because to what appears to be its excessive output, they raise an intriguing point. The -ize suffix is also employed to produce verbs for which a semantic counterpart already exists, such as legitimate and legitimize, which both mean "to make lawful or legal," as they also observe that -ize "is in competition with other verbalizing processes" (ibid). The verbal suffix -en is less useful. Phonological constraints render it less productive; it can only attach to monosyllables that finish in a plosive, fricative, or affricate. Its basic meaning is "to make more X," as in whiten (Plag, 2003:). Its production is much more severely constrained than this, according to Bauer and Huddleston (2002), who also note that it now attaches to bases that exclusively terminate in the alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/.

Semantic Function of Adjectival Suffixes:

The two types of adjectives that most adjectival suffixes often result in are relational and qualitative adjectives (Plag, 2003). "Relate the noun the adjective qualifies to the base word of the derived adjective" is how relational adjectives define themselves (p. 93). For instance, we have changed the noun election to one "having to do with congress" by adding the suffix -al to congress in the phrase congressional election. In addition to being extremely prolific in bases ending in -ation (Bauer, 1983) and -ment (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002), this denominal suffix -al also appears in the allomorphs -ial and -ual, as in colonial and ritual. Only noun bases ending in -ion are now productive for the less productive suffix -ary, which forms relational adjectives (Plag, 2003; Bauer & Huddleston, 2002). Simply said, qualitative adjectives provide the words they modify characteristics. Relational adjectives are usually found in the attributive position of a phrase, but qualitative adjectives are more frequently found in the predicate position, as in That was an absurd remark. The suffix -ish (Bauer, 1983) is a prime example of a very prolific suffix that forms qualitative adjectives; it denotes "somewhat X, vaguely X." It can be attached to nouns to produce bookish or silly (Bauer & Huddleston, 2002), to numbers, as in We'll arrive around sevenish, to other adjectives, as in a yellowish pallor, and to grammatical phrases, such out-of-the-wayish (Plag, 2003).

Instructional Utilization of Derivational Suffixes:

- The intricacies involved in English word-formation are not readily apparent; in fact, a comprehensive inventory of derivational suffixes alone may occupy an entire book. This explanation, which is by necessity brief, is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of productivity, limitations, and rule exceptions. Instead, the aim was to show the author's deeper comprehension of this morphological process and to propose the following possible uses for it in the instruction of English as a second or foreign language. There's a debate over whether teaching English as a second/foreign language should explicitly focus on English affixes (Bauer & Nation, 1993; Pavičić Takač, 2008; Schmitt, 2000; Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002; Ward & Chuenjindaeng, 2009). There is confusion about how pupils learn and comprehend new terminology, which contributes to some of this discrepancy. In particular, it is thought that knowledge of morphology and vocabulary develops over a long length of time (Bauer & Nation, 1993; Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002). In the past, the majority of popular foreign language teaching methods "did not really know how to handle vocabulary" (Schmitt, 2000, p. 15). Instead, they mainly relied on giving out bilingual word lists and hoping that students would pick up vocabulary on their own. According to current studies on second language acquisition, one of the elements that raises a lexical item's "vocabulary learning load" is its derivational complexity (Pavičić Takač, 2008, p. 7).

Schmitt(2000) responds that instructors shouldn't be led to assume that students grasp derivations or comprehend them easily, pointing out that "even native speakers do not have full mastery over morphology until at least high school" (pp. 126–127). This can be partially explained by the fact that derivational suffixes are more common in written texts than in oral texts, according to textual studies (Schmitt, 2000). This suggests that these morphological techniques are more typical of formal, academic discourse. According to Ward and Chuenjundaeng (2009), teachers should focus more on teaching vocabulary acquisition skills, such how to utilize a dictionary effectively, to lower-level students rather than morphological analyses.

- In order to give students, the metacognitive skills they will need to "effectively control their own vocabulary learning," Schmitt (2000) recommends teaching language learners vocabulary-learning strategies (p. 138). As the acquisition process is gradual and incremental, he cautions against "presenting a word once and then forgetting about it" (p. 137). As an alternative, learners' knowledge should be reinforced and expanded by repeated reviews of terms and their derivatives. Bauer and Nation released a list of affixes in 1993 that were divided into seven difficulty levels. The criteria utilized to define these levels included frequency, productivity, predictability, regularity of function, regularity of the written form of the stem, uniformity of spelling, regularity of the spoken form of the acronym, and regularity of the acronym . This list could serve as a basis for educators creating a methodical lesson plan for their students that addresses derivatives. A number of guidelines have been proposed by Schmitt and Zimmerman (2002) to support the acquisition and learning of derivative word forms. They propose that in addition to introducing new words to students, derivatives should be discussed because this could inspire them to start thinking of the word list of the English lexicon families and morphemes. In order to prevent the overuse or improper application of suffixes, they advise giving students at least some explicit instruction in their use, noting that "Learners need instruction in the use of suffixes along with a healthy dose of caution" (164). Additionally, they advise educators to stress the derivative forms of adjectives and adverbs. Lastly, they recommend either encouraging students to seek out these texts or integrating academic texts into the already-existing curriculum.

Conclusion

This research dealt with suffixation, one of word-formation process in English language. The process was examined in technical magazines, especially in magazines concentrated on computer technology. And the Computer is intended for students and people interested in computing science. But the ratio between denominal, deadjectival and deverbal nouns is similar.

The majority derived nouns are formed from verb (68 %), in other words the vast majority consisted of deverbal nouns. The most productive suffix was suffix -ion (with its allomorphs) and suffix -ing., deverbal nouns are formed by suffix -ion, deverbal and denominal nouns are created by using suffix -ing. The agentive nouns are formed by using suffix -er/-or so this suffix is productive as well. In conclusion, written texts have a higher frequency of derivational suffixes than oral texts do. Suffixes in English originate from Latin, Greek, French or English languages. In the technical vocabulary related to information and computer technology, most derived nouns are formed by Latin suffixes or English suffixes. But in total the vast majority derived nouns in English is formed by foreign suffixes.

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