

The Origin of the Affixes in English

Sahibzada Zarghuna

Termez State University, English language and literature 2-year master's degree

Abstract

There are several types of word formation in linguistics. They can be divided into morphological and syntactic-morphological types. The morphological type includes affixation; phrase or combination; shortening or truncating words; abbreviation; mixing; root formation and others. Sound and stress sharing, sound imitation, and repetition can be included in this class or classified as phonetic or morphophonemic types of individual word formation.

Keywords: abbreviations, truncating words, anti-missile, semi-productive, non-productive, lexico-grammatical, local affixes, synonymous affixes, semi-productive, non-productive, semi-affixes, homonymous.

Introduction

Conversion is usually classified as a method of syntactic or syntactic-morphological word formation. Finally, the migration and expansion of meaning, especially when an existing word is divided into two or more homonyms, is sometimes called a divergence of meaning, sometimes seen as a separate semantic type of word formation, but this the point is open to doubt, because in English there are no regular patterns in which new meanings can appear in existing words, and one word with two common meanings and two or more it is very difficult to distinguish words that are more homonymous. Sometimes both affixation and conversion are classified by derivative to differentiate them from word structure, and changes in sound and stress, abbreviations, etc., are considered separately as minor methods of word formation.

It turns out that the idea that prefixes do not change the meaning of the speech part of modified stems is less accurate if applied to modern English. There are about 25 prefixes which, although rarely used, can modify the part-of-speech meaning of stems – usually changing nouns to verbs or nouns to adjectives: gulf (n) – engulf (v), bug (n) – debug (v), war (n) – prewar, postwar, antiwar (adj), tank (n) – anti-tank (adj), wit (n) – outwit (v). The trend, however, is not universal: missile (n) – anti-missile (n), Impressionism (n) – Post-Impressionism (n). If this really is a regular phenomenon, and not just a few isolated examples, it can reasonably be argued that English prefixes are not different from suffixes in their ability to modify the lexico-grammatical meaning of words, i.e. like suffixes, they can also be convertive or non-convertive.

Literature review and methodology. Prefixes are mainly classified according to semantic principle, productivity, and etymology. Additives can be productive, semi-productive and non-productive. Semantically, they are classified according to the meaning they convey to the modified word. It should be noted that prefixes have a more specific and less generalized meaning than suffixes, and if the same form (e.g., dis-, un-) is attached to different parts of speech, different meanings may occur, can mean and therefore should be considered as two homonyms:

- 1) Prefixes with a negative meaning: un-, in-, dis- (if used with nouns or adjectives);
- 2) Prefixes with a meaning of reversal or opposition: un-, dis-, re- (if used with verbs), de-;

- 3) Prefixes denoting a wrong or uncompleted action: mis-,
- 4) Prefixes denoting time and space relations: pre-, post-, over-, under-, super-, ultra-, extra-;
- 5) Oppositional prefixes: anti-, counter-;
- 6) Prefixes with the meaning of devoiding: de-.

According to their origin, prefixes, like suffixes, are classified into native prefixes (mis-, under-) and borrowed ones. These may be of Latin (pre-, post-, re-), French (dis-) and Greek (anti-) origin.

Discussion. During the development of the English language, he adopted many foreign words. As a result, both their stems and foreign affixes are spoken; some of those affixes were later used as a productive morpheme, even with native English stems: -ist, -ism, -ee, -or, -able, dis-, de-, re-, and so on. Eventually, the meanings of some foreign affixes overlapped with the meanings of existing local affixes, resulting in synonymous affixes. For example, the suffix -er, which denotes the mediator or executor of an action, is now synonymous with the mastered affixes -ist, -eer, -or. As usual, in such cases the synonymous units had certain differences in meaning and usage. The suffix -ist, in contrast to -er, is mostly associated with non-Germanic (violinist, but fiddler) horse stems and usually expresses adherence to a principle or political doctrine (chartist, Darwinist). Agent names with -ist usually correspond to the name of the theory, formed with -ism (Chartism, Darwinism). Meanwhile, the -eer suffix has discriminatory power (profiteer, racketeer). However, the meaning of affixes has also undergone a number of semantic changes, including the expansion, migration, and differentiation of meaning. As a result, a number of commonly used affixes are polysemantic. In modern English, the suffix -er, which is probably the only suffix most commonly used, can mean: 1) a person who follows a profession (writer, driver, miner, baker); 2) a person who is so busy during a speech (packer, taker, jumper); 3) a person living in a certain place (Londoner); 4) a person who is addicted to something (sleeper, eater); 5) device or instrument (transmitter, computer, trailer). This can lead to the homonymy of words formed as follows: e.g. A fighter is any attack aircraft that is fighting, as well as the pilot of that aircraft. In other cases, two different affixes correspond during the development of English; that is, we added -ly to adjective stems and made adjectives (quickly, slowly) and added -ly to adjective stems to make adjectives (lovely, friendly); -en is used in the construction of verbs (stiffen, strengthen) and -en adjectives (wooden, golden), etc. The suffix -ish is often regarded as one suffix with two homonymous meanings; however, no semantic connection can be traced between the two, so -ish meaning 'something like X', 'a weaker kind of X' modifying adjectival stems (bluish) is something entirely different from -ish meaning resembling added to noun-stems to produce an adjective (girlish). The problem is much the same with the prefix un-, which seems to have two homonymous variants – one with a negative meaning (unhappy), the other denoting a reverse or opposite action (unbind, uncover).

Result. We use in English language semi-affixes. A number of commonly used words in modern English, particularly -proof, -man, -worthy and -like, have an ambiguous status: on the one hand, they correspond to meaningful words; on the other hand, they are routinely used to form new words and have a more generalized meaning than the corresponding word itself. For example: -man seems to have acquired an agentive meaning in chairman, and lost its meaning of 'maleness' (cf. chairman – the person who is in charge of a meeting, committee, company, or organization; chairperson); moreover, a Sony Walkman is not a man at all, but a tape-playing machine. Linguists seem to agree these are root-morphemes in the process of developing into suffixes, and so call them semi-affixes. More semi-affixes seem to enter English now as part of brand names like Sense-0-matic (= a kind of automatic switch with a sensory device), Blend-a-med (= a much-advertised

toothpaste), Suntronic (= a solar-powered wristwatch) and the like, deriving from automatic, electronic, etc., by the process of clipping. From the point of view of origin affixes are subdivided into 2 main classes: the native affixes and the borrowed affixes. Native affixes are those that existed in English in the Old English period or were formed from Old English words.

Conclusion. The term borrowed affixes is not very exact as affixes are never borrowed as such, but only as parts of loan words. To enter the morphological system of the English language a borrowed affix has to satisfy certain conditions. The borrowing of the affixes is possible only a) if there a great number of words containing this affix b) if its meaning and function are definite, and if its structural pattern corresponds to the structural patterns already existing in the language.

If these conditions are fulfilled the foreign affix may even become productive and combine with native stems or borrowed stems within the system of English vocabulary like –“able”- Lat “-abilis” in such words as laugh-able or unforgettable.

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