

Linguistic Theory and Practice: Suffixation and Terminology

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Abstract: The article is in the area of applied linguistics. It offers a brief outlook on suffixation as a word-formative method from the point of view of the theory of linguistics. Definitions of suffixes are given. The structural and semantic approaches in the classification of the constituent elements of a word are applied. Suffixes are discussed in terms of their distribution in the word and are specified as obligatorily stem-final elements but not necessarily word-final elements. The origin of suffixes is touched on as well. The function of suffixes within the derivands is also discussed. Semantic issues of suffixation are focused on, including grammatical and lexical meaning, as well as the stylistic components. The overall grammatical or lexical semantics of suffixes is manifested in their common (categorical) or special (classifying) meaning within the respective framework of meaning. Other theoretical issues covered are five criteria of description and classification of suffixes. Examples are given of the productivity of a specific suffix (-ER) in general English and in English for special purposes. The focus is on two semantic components in the overall semantic structure of the suffix manifested in a total of 67 corpus entries. The applicability of such knowledge in distance learning is discussed.

Index Terms — foreign language teaching (FLT), semantics, suffixation, terminology, word-formation

I. INTRODUCTION

The abrupt change in the current situation due to the Corona virus pandemic has led to visible transformations in the set of methods, approaches and tools employed in foreign language teaching (FLT). Long spans of distance learning replaced the usual face-to-face classes and communicative methods in foreign language teaching were no longer a priority. They were often replaced by conventional methods, such as a written presentation on a particular topic. We believe that this type of presentation is still applicable in the field of FLT. Our belief is grounded in the fact that in this manner more theoretical topics can be offered, which otherwise stay away from the student's attention, but are important for understanding and mastering the language system of the studied foreign language. Equipped with the necessary examples of terminological units, they would offer yet another opportunity for students to increase their terminological stock, turned meaningful through the prism of the patterns along which the word, respectively the term, is formed.

The present study aims to offer key knowledge on issues related to word formation and to the distinction of the constructing elements of lexical items.

The issue of word formation becomes important at a very specific stage of learning a foreign language. In particular, learners begin to ask questions about word formation in the foreign language they have chosen as early as they attain level A2. However, a surge in this area of their perception of

the foreign language occurs when they are approximately at level B1-B2 and have accumulated a lexical minimum of linguistic means. Our observations are based on the training in English language to students at the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski".

In a series of articles, we have considered such general theoretical topics and concepts as follows: word formation as a science [1], derivation as a model in word-formation [2], what a morpheme is and semantic and structural classifications of morphemes [3].

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II. SUFFIXATION

For the purposes of this paper, we will adhere to the traditional definition of affixes as elements of the word; they are "inclusions" [4] in the word and as such always function as parts of the word and play a certain role therein. Hence, the notion that affixes cannot occur in language outside of words. The purpose of their existence is to change the meaning of the word without changing its integrity.

As the more important and larger part of affixation in English, suffixation requires a detailed study.

Suffixation is in its essence a process of adding suffixes to bases. Discussing the morphemic status of suffixes, [5] defines them as "linear units on the word level". According to another definition, given by [6], "suffixes are post-root morphemes which do not function in language as independent lexical units", that is they cannot be found in language as separate words. So, one of their characteristic features is their combinability. Suffixes combine with bases according to certain established rules and patterns in which, according to [7], bases are the "semantic centres" of the newly-formed words, and suffixes are their "structural centres". Sometimes the term suffix is used in traditional grammar to denote two entirely different units: derivative suffixes and grammatical suffixes, or inflections. Those are to be differentiated in terms of their distribution in the word, as [8] suggests. Both can never take word-initial position. Derivative suffixes are to be seen at the end of the stem (the stem being, in the definition of [9], "that part of the derived word from which all inflections have been removed"). Inflections immediately follow the derivative suffix, marking at the same time the end of the whole word. The basic distributional difference between suffixes and inflections, therefore, is that the former are stem-final elements and the latter – word-final. A suffix may take word-final position if the inflection is unmarked.

A. Origin of suffixes

Suffixation is an old and productive means of Word-Formation. It has been of frequent occurrence in English. It is being done in two ways: by attaching loan suffixes to native bases, or native suffixes to loan bases. Loan suffixes, mostly French, Latin and Greek, were taken from loan derivands.

As a result of the parallel between simple and derived words, suffixes were felt as such and began to be used in new formations. Owing to the great influx of suffixes during the later Middle English period, the language acquired a great treasury of suffixes, which gave it an exceptionally great possibility of forming new words and differentiating between the slightest nuances of thought. Traditional grammar explains the origin of suffixes as a result of one part of the word acquiring a meaning or function that it had not had before. This part came to be felt as a complement and could therefore be attached to other words as well.

O. Jespersen refers to this mode of affixational production as “secretion”. He finds it unjustifiable to accept that suffixes were at an earlier time independent words. Reference [10] takes the view that suffixes, historically speaking, are “extinct second-words, which distinguishes them from prefixes as extinct first-words”.

The system of suffixes is historically changeable. A number of suffixes can be found in Modern English in a limited number of words, unlike others which become more and more active. As [11] points out, certain suffixes have been replaced by others originating from second elements of compound words which, in their turn, have ceased appearing in language as separate words. Thus, suffixes in English are a basically stable system, which can be changed and refilled with new elements in the course of its development.

B. Function of suffixes within the derivands

Suffixes not only participate in the process of the formation of new words but also strictly determine their grammatical characteristics. In this respect, there can be traced another difference between suffixes and prefixes: in a suffixal derivand, the suffix is the grammatically dominant part. In comparison, prefixes do not dominate grammatically in the derivand; they can only semantically modify the operands to which they are “affixed”, without having any hold on their grammatical appurtenance. Thus, a prefixal derivand joins the category the unprefixal operand belongs to.

C. Semantic issues of suffixation

The function of suffixes within the derivands, it should be noted, depends on their semantics. Suffixes carry lexical and grammatical meanings, the latter being of particular importance for determining the status of the whole derivand. Linguists, such as [7], [12]-[14], distinguish different types of GRAMMATICAL MEANING in the overall semantics of suffixes:

- 1) common grammatical, or common categorial, meaning

Each suffix is bound to a definite part of speech. When in derivands, suffixes characterise these new words as belonging to certain parts of speech. Thus, suffixes can be morphologically divided into categories according to the part-of-speech criterion. They can be:

- substantival
- adjectival
- verbal
- adverbial

Derivands, respectively, are classified into the same four groups.

Suffixation, consequently, is closer to Morphology than the other means of Word-Formation, as [12] points out.

We give an example with perhaps the very first suffix that learners perceive as such at the initial level of learning English: the suffix **-er** (e.g. in teacher = teach + er). In modern English, it is extremely productive because it can be added to a huge number of verbal roots and can produce either of the following two substantival meanings:

1. [+AGENT], [+PERFORMER OF THE ACTION], [+PERSON WHO PERFORMS THE ACTION] or [+PERSON ENGAGED IN THE ACTION];
2. [+INSTRUMENT], [+MACHINE PERFORMING THE ACTION].

Dictionaries abound in such derivative words. The list below comprises examples taken from two English-Bulgarian dictionaries of terms which are offered to and extensively used by students at the University of Mining and Geology: the Dictionary of Mining and Geology [15], and the Technical Dictionary [16]. Here, in an alphabetical order, we give only terms that are related to/accompany the activities in the areas of exploration and mining:

1 – **A corpus of terms with the substantival meaning of [+AGENT], [+PERSON WHO PERFORMS THE ACTION] or [+PERSON ENGAGED IN THE ACTION]** is presented in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1

A CORPUS OF TERMS WITH THE SUBSTANTIVAL MEANING OF [+AGENT]

assay - права проба/анализ +er → assayer = лаборант; пробовземач;
bare – (откр. доб.) откривам, махам откривката +er → barer = работник по откривката (в кариера);
charge – (взр.дело) зареждам, поставям заряд +er → charger = взривник, бомбаджия;
dress – (обог.) сортирам (руда) +er → dresser = работник в обогатителна фабрика; отговорник за обогатяването (сепарирането) [+човек, извършващ сортиране/сепариране на рудата];
drill – пробивам сас сонда +er → driller = (сонд.) сондьор;
explore +er → explorer = проучвател [човек, който извършва проучвания];
fill – запълвам материал, запълвам пространство; насипвам +er → filler = работник-запълвач; товарач; помощник-миньор помощник копач;
get – добивам, извличам, произвеждам (полезни изкопаеми) +er → getter = майстор-миньор;

grind – смилам, стривам, раздробявам +er → grinder = 1. машинист на мелница/трошачка; 2. (откр. доб.) шлифовач
hag – изкопавам въглища ръчно +er → hagger = майстор-копач (който прави подкопа на фронта); (оттам: coal hagger = майстор-миньор, майстор- копач във въгледобива);
install – поставям, инсталирам, монтирам сглобявам (машини); съоръжавам +er → installer = монтажник (оттам: pipe installer = монтажник на тръбопровод/тръбопроводна мрежа
jig – разделям чрез тръскане [вибриране] +er → jigger = работник на промивна машина;
keep +er → keeper = склададжия [+лице, занимаващо се с действието държа, запазвам];
load – натоварвам, зареждам +er → loader = машинист на товарачна машина; работник товарач [+лице, занимаващо се с действието]; [+ЛИЦЕ, ИЗПОЛЗВАЩО МАШИНА ЗА ИЗВЪРШВАНЕ НА ДЕЙСТВИЕТО];
mine (out) – извличам, изземвам +er → miner = миньор [+човек, извършващ извличане/изземване от земята];
muck (vb.) – (доб.) натоварвам разрушена скала (от: muck = 1. скални късове; отпадъчен скален материал; скала, разрушена с взрив; 2. несвързани скали в горната част на откритката) +er → mucker = работник по натоварването; машинист на товарачка];
observe – наблюдавам +er → observer = наблюдател, регистратор (при геоф. изследвания);
oversee – надзирава, наблюдава, ръководи +er → overseer = началник участък, началник на рудник [+лице, извършващо действието];
pack – 1. (подз. доб.) запълвам със скален материал; 2. (мин. стр.) изграждам предпазна ивица от скален материал (при прокаране на широк забой) +er → packer = строител на опорни скални ивици;
quarry – разработвам по открит начин +er → quarrier/quarryman = работник в кариера [+лице, извършващо разработване по открит начин];
rob – изземвам целик или част от целик (който в много случаи по проект не подлежи на изземване) +er → robber = работник по изземване на целиците [+ЛИЦЕ, ИЗВЪРШВАЩО ДЕЙСТВИЕТО];
strike – удрям(се); (пол. изк.) пресичам +er → striker = работник-обръщач на кофата в надшахтовата кула;
strip – (откр. доб.) изземвам откритка, откривам; (подз. доб.) изземвам запаси +er → stripper = забоеен работник;
tamp – (взр. дело) – напълвам със забивка (сондаж/взривна дупка)

+er → tamper = работник по поставяне на набивката във взривна дупка;
underlooker = помощник-началник на рудник/на участък; минен майстор;
undermanager = главен инженер на рудник; заместник-началник на рудник по производствено-техническите въпроси; началник на подземен минен комплекс; началник по разработването на минен пласт;
view – наблюдавам +er → viewer = 1. надзирател; 2. началник/помощник-началник на рудник;
weld – заварявам +er → welder = заварчик;
withdraw – извличам (за крепеж); изземвам +er → withdrawer = работник по спасяване на крепежни материали;
wreck – аварира, поврежда (се), разрушава (се) +er → wrecker = работник по аварийните ремонти;

TERMS WITH THE SUBSTANTIVAL MEANING OF [+AGENT], [+PERSON WHO PERFORMS THE ACTION] OR [+PERSON ENGAGED IN THE ACTION]

2 – A corpus of terms with the substantival meaning of [+INSTRUMENT], [+MACHINE PERFORMING THE ACTION], [+PERFORMER OF THE ACTION], is presented in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2

A CORPUS OF TERMS WITH THE SUBSTANTIVAL MEANING OF [+INSTRUMENT]

absorb +er → absorber = абсорбер, демпфер; амортизатор, ударосмекчител [+УСТРОЙСТВО, КОЕТО поглъща вибрациите при удар];
arrest +er → arrestor 1. (мин. маш.) = стопор, задържащо [улавящо] приспособление, хващач (напр. car arrester = вагонохващач); 2. (техн. безоп.) = газочистител;
bulldoze +er → bulldozer = булдозер [+машина, която подравнява], [+машина, която разбива скални късове];
catch – хващам, захващам, улавям +er → catcher = 1. (рудн. трансп.) улавящо/спиращо/ захващащо приспособление; парашут; 2. (сонд.) уловител
compute +er → computer = компютър [+машина, която изчислява];
convey +er → conveyor/conveyor = конвейер, транспортър [+машина/устройство, които пренасят, транспортират/превозват];
derail – дерайлирам, излизам от релсите +er → derailer = вагоноизхвъргач;
diffuse – разсейвам, разпространявам, дифундирам +er → diffuser/diffuser fan = дифузор;

explode – взривява (се), експлодира +er → exploder = взривна машина; капсул-детонатор;
feed +er → feeder = подавач, хранващо устройство; пробутвач; фидер [+устройство, което подава, хранва];
grind +er → grinder = (обог.) мелница; трошачка [+машина, която дроби, счуква, смила, стрива];
hold +er → holder = държач [+устройство, което задържа, държи, стяга];
idle – работя на празен ход +er → idler = 1.незадвижваща ролка/шайба; 2.ролкова опора; 3. междинно [паразитно] зъбно колело; idlers – мн.ч. от idler = носещи ролки на гумено-лентов транспортър;
ignite – запалвам, възпламенявам +er → igniter = възпламенител; запалка; взривна машинка;
infuse – вливам в, нагнетявам +er → infuser = устройство за нагнетяване на вода в пласта (с оглед намаляване на запрашеността при изземване);
jump – (откр. доб.) прокарам сондаж с ударна сонда +er → junper = (доб.) сонда за ударно пробиване; лост за ръчно пробиване на взривна дупка (в почви) [+инструмент/машина, извършваща действието];
keep +er → keeper = държач, скоба, осигурителна гайка [+УСТРОЙСТВО/ЕЛЕМЕНТ/ КОМПОНЕНТ, КОЙТО задържа, държи, стяга, осигурява];
load – натоварвам, зареждам +er → loader = товарачка, товарачна машина; претоварач [+машина, която товари]
minidozer = рудничен булдозер за изграждане на опорни скални ивици;
mix – смесвам, размесвам, разбърквам +er → mixer = (мин.стр., сонд.) миксер, бъркачка, смесител; агитатор (на промивната течност);
nip – стиска, стяга, затяга +er → nipper = клещи за рязане/изтегляне на тел;
nodulise – (обог.) уедрявам, агломирам; спичам +er → noduliser = гранулятор [+МАШИНА ЗА ИЗВЪРШВАНЕ НА ДЕЙСТВИЕТО];
orient – (маркш.) насочвам, ориентирам, определям местонахождението (по компас) +er → orienter = ориентиращо устройство [+устройство, което насочва, ориентира];
pack – (подз.доб.) запълвам със скален материал; +er → racker = (мин.стр.) пакер, херметизиращо устройство; тампон;
peck – къртя, копая по малко +er → pecker = кирка, мотика [+инструмент, с който се извършва действието];
qualify – (изч.) 1.определям, квалифицирам, характеризирам; 2.изразявам количествено +er → qualifier = 1.определител; 2.класификатор, описател;

relieve – облекчавам, разтоварвам, понижавам; премахвам +er → reliever = (мин.маш.) изпускателен предпазен клапан [+УСТРОЙСТВО/КОМПОНЕНТ, КОЙТО извършват горното действие];
stretch – удължавам (се); разпъвам (се), разтеглям (се), опъвам +er → stretcher = (рудн.трансп.) обтегач [+устройство/елемент/компонент, който разтегля, опъва, обтяга];
strip – (откр.доб.) изземвам откритка, откривам +er → stripper = багер за изземване на откритка;
tipple – обръщам, разтоварвам +er → tippler = (рудн.трансп.) вагонообръщач [+машина, извършваща действието];
unload – разтоварвам, свалям товар +er → unloader = разтоварващо устройство; устройство за намаляване на налягането (напр. при гумено-лентов транспортър) [+устройство, извършващо действието];
ventilate – проветрявам, вентилирам +er → ventilator = вентилатор [+машина, извършваща действието вентилиране, вкарване на чист и изкарване на замърсения въздух в подземната изработка];
wind – 1.навивам, намотавам; 2.повдигам с лебедка/подемна машина +er → winder = (рудн.трансп.) подемна машина [+устройство/машина, извършващи действието];
widen – разширявам, проширявам +er → widener = (сонд.) разширител;
yard (дърводоб.) – извозвам/извличам с лебедка (дървен материал от сечище) +er → yarder = лебедка за извозване/извличане (на дървен материал от сечище) [+устройство/ машина, извършващи действието];
zero-reader – 1.(физ.) нулев уред, указател за равновесие (при нулеви методи на измерване); 2.(авт.) нулев индикатор.

TERMS WITH THE SUBSTANTIVAL MEANING OF [+INSTRUMENT], [+MACHINE PERFORMING THE ACTION] OR [+PERFORMER OF THE ACTION]

2) special grammatical, or classifying, meaning

It reflects one or more categories obligatory for the respective part of speech. It should be noted that, while Bulgarian adjectives have the categories of number, gender and person, English adjectives have neither of these. (Since our study is not directly related to this issue, we just mention the fact without going into details concerning the reasons.) English adjectives, therefore, carry no classifying meaning.

Suffixes, on the other hand, carry LEXICAL MEANING. It can, in its turn, be sub-divided into two components, as [13] and [14] admit:

1) common lexical meaning

It is characteristic of the respective part of speech. In the case of adjectives, the common lexical meaning is “DENOTING QUALITY”.

2) special lexical meaning

It is a component of the common-lexical semantic element and is hierarchically subordinate to it. By means of it, additional lexico-semantic classes are distinguished. Thus, adjectives are divided into:

- a) qualitative adjectives – denoting the respective quality as something natural or inherent;
- b) relative adjectives - denoting the quality as related to some other .

The above classification of semantic elements in suffixes is the traditional one. A more modern tendency in the study of suffixal semantics is to distinguish a STYLISTIC COMPONENT.

Certain suffixes may, for example, reveal the speaker's attitude towards the object or being in question. The suffix -O in STUPIDO, for instance, involves a connotative element of [+ENDEARMENT] in its semantics, in spite of the contrary denotative meaning of the base. Therefore, elements of evaluation or attitude are markers of the stylistic component in the semantics of suffixes.

It should be noted that the stylistic component is best revealed in the combination of the respective derivand with other words. Reference [17] points out that “the semantic combinability of derivands with other words in the sentence does not have a normative character”. Some of them are products of the individual word-formational work of the speakers and are formed “through a deliberate breaking of the laws of semantic combinability of words, thus creating a special expressive effect”. Therefore, derivands containing such a semantic component are stylistically marked and highly expressive, to use the terms of [18], and their creation is determined by the needs of stylistic word-formation.

In the translation of such derivands with stylistically marked suffixes, the translators should have in mind the overall emotive aspect of communication. “Emotiveness, as [18] puts it, is manifested in all languages and it should be translated properly so that the connotative function of communication were preserved”.

D. Criteria of description and classification of suffixes

Those are numerous in linguistic literature but we shall consider the basic ones:

1. Suffixes are classified according to the part-of-speech appurtenance of the newly-formed word. It should be mentioned in addition that, combining with bases, suffixes may change the part-of-speech appurtenance of the base acting thus as class-changing [19].
2. According to their origin, suffixes are divided into native and loan ones. A historically borrowed suffix is considered fully assimilated in language if it formes new words from native bases as well.
3. According to their stylistic function in the semantics of the newly-formed word, suffixes are either stylistically neutral or stylistically marked.
4. The majority of suffixes are polysemantic. They are characterized by a definite “selectability”, to use L. P. Pastoushenko's term in [20]: their semantics is often influenced by the character of the bases to which they are affixed. Therefore, considering different suffixes, one should study how they combine

with different bases and what elements of their semantics are revealed.

5. Suffixes are also characterized in terms of activity and productivity. These features hold true of derivative suffixes and have been discussed in detail in other works of ours. We shall only remind the term productivity as defined by [21]: “Productivity refers to the number of words formed after a pattern and registered in the dictionary”. The validity of this statement has already been proved by the two extensive list of terms above.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that regardless of the theoretical bias of such works in the sphere of word-formation, if they are backed by a multitude of appropriate examples, they are employed in the field of foreign language teaching to engineers, especially in the distance form of e-learning. The reasons for such applicability are as follows:

- Students are given the opportunity to scrutinise the structure of the word;
- As a result, they comprehend the semantic possibilities of the pattern offered;
- They apply that same pattern in the understanding of similar lexical units in scientific texts and consequently, in the independent production of such.

In this sense, distance learning is a means of providing such knowledge and an environment to motivate students to independently work and upgrade.

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