

FEATURES OF AFFIXATION IN MODERN ENGLISH.

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Abstract: *This article based on detailed study of affixation, which play important role in word formation. According to this general aim the following particular tasks are put forward: 1. to classify affixes. 2. to classify the affixes according to its structure and semantics. In addition this article is determined by the necessity the study of affixation which form a large layer of word – building process. And studying the productive ways of affixes in Modern English.*

Key words: *word formation, part of speech, morpheme, paradigm, synchronic and diachronic treatment, lexical meaning, grammatical meaning*

Word – building is one of the main ways of enriching vocabulary. Affixation is one of the most productive ways of word building throughout the history of English. The main function of affixation in Modern English is to form one part of speech from another; the secondary function is to change the lexical meaning of the same part of speech. As we are future teacher must know the rules of word – formation. It will help us to teach our students. Besides if we know affixes we can easily form new words while we are writing or speaking. If we describe a word as an autonomous unit of language in which a particular meaning is associated with a particular sound complex and which is capable of a particular grammatical employment and able to form a sentence by itself we have the possibility to distinguish it from the other fundamental language unit, namely, the morpheme. A morpheme is also an association of a given meaning with a given sound pattern. But unlike a word it is not autonomous. Morphemes occur in speech only as constituent parts of words, not independently, although a word may consist of a single morpheme. Nor are they

divisible into smaller meaningful units. That is why the morpheme may be defined as the minimum meaningful language unit. The term morpheme is derived from Gr morphē 'form'+ emē. Linguists to denote the smallest unit or the minimum distinctive feature have adopted the Greek suffix – emē. (Cf. phoneme, sememe). The morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of form. A form in these cases is a recurring discrete unit of speech. A form is said to be free if it may stand alone without changing its meaning; if not, it is a bound form, so called because it is always bound to something else. For example, if we compare the words sportive and elegant and their parts, we see that sport, sportive, elegant may occur alone as utterances, whereas eleg – – ive, – ant are bound forms because they never occur alone. A word is, by L. Bloomfield's definition, a minimum free form. A morpheme is said to be either bound or free. This statement' should be taken with caution. It means that some morphemes are capable of forming words without adding other morphemes: that is, they are homonymous to free forms. According to the role they play in constructing words, morphemes are subdivided into roots and affixes. The latter are further subdivided, according to their position, into prefixes, suffixes and infixes, and according to their function and meaning, into derivational and functional affixes, the latter also called endings or outer formatives. When a derivational or functional affix is stripped from the word, what remains is a stem (or a stem base). The stem expresses the lexical and the part of speech meaning.[1] For the word hearty and for the paradigm heart (Sing.) – hearts (Pl.)[2] the stem may be represented as heart– This stem is a single morpheme, it contains nothing but the root, so it is a simple stem. It is also a free stem because it is homonymous to the word heart. A stem may also be defined as the part of the word that remains unchanged throughout its paradigm. The stem of the paradigm hearty – heartier – (the) heartiest is hearty– It is a free stem, but as it consists of a root morpheme and an affix, it is not simple but derived. Thus, a stem containing one or more affixes is a derived stem. If after deducing the affix the remaining stem is not homonymous to a separate word of the same root, we call it a bound stem. Thus, in the word cordial 'proceeding as if from the heart', the adjective-forming suffix can be separated on the analogy with such

words as bronchia/, radial, social. The remaining stem, however, cannot form a separate word by itself: it is bound. In cordially and cordiality, on the other hand, the stems are free.

Bound stems are especially characteristic of loan words. The point may be illustrated by the following French borrowings: arrogance, charity, courage, coward, distort, involve, notion, legible and tolerable, to give but a few.[3] After the suffixes of these words are taken away the remaining elements are: arrog-, char-, cour-, cow-, – tort, – involve, nat-, leg-, toler-, which do not coincide with any semantically related independent words. Roots are main morphemic vehicles of a given idea in a given language at a given stage of its development. A root may be also regarded as the ultimate constituent element which remains after the removal of all functional and derivational affixes and does not admit any further analysis. It is the common element of words within a word-family. Thus, – heart – is the common root of the following series of words: heart, hearten, dishearten, heartily, heartless, hearty, heartiness, sweetheart, heart-broken, kind-hearted, whole-heartedly, etc. In some of these, as, for example, in hearten, there is only one root; in others the root – heart is combined with some other root, thus forming a compound like sweetheart.

It will at once be noticed that the root in English is very often homonymous with the word. This fact is of fundamental importance as it is one of the most specific features of the English language arising from its general grammatical system on the one hand, and from its phonemic system on the other. The influence of the analytical structure of the language is obvious. The second point, however, calls for some explanation. Actually the usual phonemic shape most favoured in English is one single stressed syllable: bear, find, jump, land, man, sing, etc. This does not give much space for a second morpheme to add classifying Lexico-grammatical meaning to the lexical meaning already present in the root-stem, so the Lexico-grammatical meaning must be signaled by distribution. In the phrases a morning's drive, a morning's ride, a morning's walk the words drive, ride and walk receive the Lexico-grammatical meaning of a noun not due to the structure of their stems, but because they are preceded by a noun in the Possessive case. An English word does not

necessarily contain formatives indicating to what part of speech it belongs. This holds true even with respect to inflexible parts of speech, i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives. Not all roots are free forms, but productive roots, i.e. roots capable of producing new words, usually are. The semantic realization of an English word is therefore very specific. Its dependence on distribution is further enhanced by the widespread occurrence of homonymy both among root morphemes and affixes. Note how many words in the following statement might be ambiguous if taken in isolation: A change of work is as good as a rest. The above treatment of the root is purely synchronic, as we have taken into consideration only the facts of present-day English. But the same problem of the morpheme serving as the main signal of a given lexical meaning is studied in etymology, i.e. in that branch of linguistics which deals with the origin and development of words tracing them back to their earliest determinable source. When approached thus historically or diachronically the word heart will be classified as Common Germanic. One will look for cognates, i.e. words descended from a common ancestor. The cognates of heart are the Latin cor, whence cordial 'hearty', 'sincere', and so cordially and cordiality; also the Greek kardia, whence English cardiac condition. The cognates outside the English vocabulary are the Russian сердце, the German Herzt the Spanish corazon and some other words. To emphasize the difference between the synchronic and the diachronic treatment, we shall call the common element of cognate words in different languages not their root but their radical element. An interesting example of historical treatment may be found in Potter's book.¹ Potter shows that the same radical element s-d is to be recognized in the English monosyllables sit, seat, soot and nest. The radical element is s-d, the vowels may be different. Potter distinguishes five grades: (1) – sed – as in Latin sedere, whence the English sedentary 'requiring much sitting', 'physically inactive' (sedentary work, sedentary person) and sediment 'the part that settles to the bottom of a liquid'. From sedare, sedat (the causative of sedere) the English vocabulary has sedate 'quiet', 'calm' and its derivatives: sedately, sedateness, sedative; supersede is 'to sit above', hence 'to replace'. This meaning developed, as Potter explains, at the time when seats at schools were assigned by quality of work, so if a pupil surpassed

another he superseded him. The verb *sit* belongs to this group also, being developed from Common Germanic *setjan*. (2) The variant – – *sod* – is represented by the Past Tense *sat*, (3) [-se:d] – is observed in *Mode seat* <old Norse *sæti*>; Common Germanic *sæt*. (4) [-so:d-l] as in English *soot* with its Northern pronunciation [su:t] <OE and ON *sot* 'that which sits or settles in the chimney'. (5) From the vanishing grade *E-sad-1* combined with the adverb *ni*- 'down' which is cognate with the German *nieder*, the Indo-European noun *ni-sd-os* 'place where the bird sits down' is formed, whence both the English *nest* and the Russian гнездо. The Latin cognate is *nidus*, which is used in English as a scientific term 'place in which insects deposit eggs'; *nidification* means 'nest building'. These two types of approach, synchronic and diachronic, give rise to two different principles of arranging morphologically related words into groups. In the first case series of words with a common root morpheme in which derivatives are opposable to their unaffixed and unaffixed bases, are combined cf. *heart, hearty, etc.*. The second grouping results in families of historically cognate words, cf. *heart, cor (Lat), etc.* Unlike roots, affixes are always bound forms. The difference between suffixes and prefixes, it will be remembered, is not confined to their respective position, suffixes being «fixed after» and prefixes «fixed before» the stem. It also concerns their function and meaning. A suffix is a derivational morpheme following the stem and forming a new derivative in a different part of speech or a different word class, cf. – *en, – y, – less* in *hearten, hearty, heartless*. When both the underlying and the resultant forms belong to the same part of speech, the suffix serves to differentiate between Lexico-grammatical classes by rendering some very general lexico-grammatical meaning. For instance, both – *ify* and – *er* are verb suffixes, but the first characterizes causative verbs, such as *horrify, purify*, whereas the second is mostly typical of frequentative verbs: *flicker, shimmer, twitter* and the like. If we realize that suffixes render the most general semantic component of the word's lexical meaning by marking the general class of phenomena to which the referent of the word belongs, the reason why suffixes are as a rule semantically fused with the stem stands explained. A prefix is a derivational morpheme standing before the root and modifying meaning, cf. *to hearten* – *to*

dishearten. It is only with verbs and stative verbs that a prefix may serve to distinguish one part of speech from another, like in earth n–unearth v, sleep n – asleep (stative).

References:

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