Plag (2018): 4. Affixation

Reading guide

Note: this is chapter 4 of a book on wordformation. If you need to brush up your morphology, take a look at the material from the introduction to English linguistics classes.

1. Be able to explain and illustrate in your own words why determining whether a form is bound or free is not always straightforward. Based on Plag's discussion of examples (1)–(4), is *stick* in *lipstick* better analyzed as head of a compound or as a derivationial affix?

2. What are neoclassical elements? Why does Plag think bound roots are a good solution? What does the term *combining form* refer to?

3. OED section: here, not all detail is important. But what does it mean to say that an affix is "still productive"? And note that Plag distinguishes between dictionaries and reference books on English derivational morphology (why?).

4. Can you reproduce Plag's *-ment* finding using the COCA?

- Properties of affixes

  Phonology What is meant by the term *phonological alternation* when it comes to affixation? What are Latinate affixes?

  Morphology What are the main points here?

  Semantic properties
  1. Be able to explain in your own words why *curiosity* is an example of polysemy, semantic opacity, and semantic compositionality at the same time.
  2. What is the difference between affix polysemy and base polysemy in derivation?
  3. BONUS: Event/result ambiguity exists also outside of derivation, for example for the noun *exam*. Illustrate this ambiguity with examples.

  The details in the reminder of the chapter are not so important for the moment, but do take a look at the characterization of a few affixes.

  Finally, focus only on *-ity* and *-ness*:

  1. For each affix individually, formulate hypotheses that you could in principle test by using a corpus. Use the affixes' characterization to formulate your hypotheses.
  2. Formulate also one or two comparative hypotheses, using information on both affixes.