

A cognitive approach to SUFF1-SUFF2 combinations

Stela Manova (Vienna)
stela.manova@univie.ac.at

There is a long-standing debate in the literature on affix order about the factors that constraint affix combinations, since of all possible affix combinations in a language only a few exist. This paper is based on an original idea (Manova 2008) about the relation between the first (SUFF1) and the second (SUFF2) derivational suffix in a word-form of the type BASE-SUFF1-SUFF2 and will thus give a new twist to the issue of affix order.

I assume base-driven derivations with selectional restrictions specified in the suffix entry (Plag 1996; Giegerich 1999), which, in the case of my proposal (Manova 2008), means that all suffixes in a language are specified for syntactic category, i.e. word-class. In contrast to other proposals that require linguistic knowledge (e.g. Aronoff & Fuhrhop 2002 explain English suffix combinations as depending on the +/-Latin feature of the suffix, Plag & Baayen 2009 argue for parsability-based hierarchy of suffixes that correlates with hapax-based productivity, etc.), my approach is based on general cognitive knowledge. It relies on categories such as 'noun', 'verb' and 'adjective' that can be defined in terms of universally accessible cognitive primes. I link the word-class of the derived base (terminating in SUFF1) with the word-class of the derivative (terminating in SUFF2) in a specific (distributional) way and demonstrate that there is a systematic relation between SUFF1 and SUFF2. In most instances, only a single SUFF2 of a particular word-class exists. If there are two or more SUFF2 suffixes with the same word-class specification, either one of the suffixes dominates over the others in terms of default (most of the existing derivations exhibit the default suffix) or the suffixes involved produce words that are semantically opposite (e.g. *-ful* and *-less* adjectives in English) and thus cannot be seen as competing, which may be explained as due to blocking (Rainer 1988, among others). In order to show the advantages of my approach, I will rearrange the data from Aronoff & Fuhrhop (2002) who, with the help of OED, analyse the existing combination of 44 English suffixes, as well as the data from Plag & Baayen (2009) who, based on various electronic corpora, give the existing combinations of 31 English suffixes in numbers. I will also test my proposal against Bulgarian data.

Further, my approach is relevant to the understanding of closing suffixation and leads to a more precise definition of the latter. There are SUFF1 suffixes that appear closed to the attachment of further derivational suffixes of (a) particular word-class(es) only and suffixes that are entirely closed. The latter type encompasses a very restricted number of suffixes and coincides with the most productive suffixes in Plag & Baayen's (2009) hierarchy.

References

- Aronoff, Mark & Nanna Fuhrhop. 2002. Restricting Suffix Combinations in German and English: Closing Suffixes and the Monosuffix Constraint. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 20, 451-490.
- Giegerich, Heinz J. 1999. *Lexical Strata in English. Morphological Causes, Phonological Effects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manova, Stela. 2008. *SUFF1-SUFF2 Combinations in Bulgarian and English*. Manuscript, University of Vienna.
- Plag, Ingo. 1996. Selectional restrictions in English suffixation revisited. A reply to Fabb (1988). *Linguistics* 34, 769-798.
- Plag, Ingo & Harald Baayen. 2009. Suffix Order and Morphological Processing. *Language* 85.1, 109-152.
- Rainer, Franz. 1988. Towards a Theory of Blocking: the case of Italian and German quality nouns. In G. Booij and J. van Marle (eds.) *Yearbook of Morphology 1988*. Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer, 155-185.