

# Morphology in English

## Word Formation in Cognitive Grammar

Zeki Hamawand



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Cognitive Grammar

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To the memory of my parents



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Zeki Hamawand

# Preface

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*Morphology in English: Word Formation in Cognitive Grammar* is a textbook which provides an in-depth analysis of English morphology. Theoretically, the framework is rooted in Langacker (1987, 1991). Practically, it is based on Hamawand (2007, 2008, 2009). Morphology is a branch of linguistics which studies the form-meaning relationships between the subparts of composite words in the lexicon. It aims to show how the subparts are integrated and how the resulting formations are interpreted. A composite word consists of two or more subparts, one of which imposes its profile on the entire structure. The description of a composite word involves two aspects. One is substance, which consists of two facades: form or the phonological representation, and meaning or the semantic content. The form serves to express meaning. The other is use, the purpose for or way in which a composite word is employed. The use of a composite word is determined by the way the language user construes a situation, which differs relative to the demands of discourse. The substance of a composite word is activated as a response to language use.

The lexicon is a network of morphological units which the language user associates in conformity with cognitive principles. Morphological units display three linguistic characteristics. One characteristic pertains to linguistic multiplicity, whereby a particular morpheme has a series of interrelated senses which gather around a prototype. The senses are organized in terms of distance from the prototype, based on the degree of similarity. Another characteristic revolves around linguistic relationship, whereby different morphemes cluster in domains defined by two types of relation: one is of similarity vis-à-vis the overall concept of the domain they form; the other is of difference with respect to the specific functions they perform within the domain. A further characteristic relates to linguistic alternation, whereby two, or more, rival morphemes attach to the same root and derive new forms. The resulting forms, namely the alternatives, differ with respect to the construal imposed on them. Each alternative represents a different construal, and thus has a meaning that is uniquely its own.

## Goals

To come to grips with morphology, the textbook links theory with practice. It has, therefore, two goals: theoretical and practical. The theoretical goal is to acquaint students with the three theories of word meaning, highlighting its impact on form. In the light of category theory, morphemes are argued to have multiple meanings, which gather around prototypical examples, and so display minimal differences in meaning. By virtue of domain theory, morphemes expressing the same concept are argued to form domains, in which they represent discrete facets, and so have different roles to play in the language. With reference to construal theory, two or more morphemes attached to the same root are argued to be distinguishable in meaning, and so the word pairs they form are distinctive in use. The practical goal is to provide students with a comprehensive description of the two essential areas of vocabulary building: derivation and compounding. It aims to develop their skills in analysing morphological expressions, familiarize them with the mechanisms used in forming composite words, and inform them of the techniques employed to account for their interpretation.

## Contents

The textbook starts with a chapter entitled ‘Fundamentals’, which serves to introduce the major terms involved in the field of morphology. The rest of the textbook is divided into four parts. Part I sheds light on the theoretical aspect of the discussion. It offers a synthesis of the leading tenets of the cognitive framework. It consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the cognitive assumptions. Chapter 2 touches upon the cognitive mechanisms. Chapter 3 addresses the cognitive operations. Parts II–IV pertain to the practical aspect of the discussion. Part II deals with prefixation. Part III copes with suffixation. Part IV grapples with compounding. Each part includes chapters on categorization, configuration and construal. Each chapter begins with an overview, where the subject matter, the objective and the procedure are stated. The overview aims to help the student to understand the content before delving into explanations. Each chapter is divided into sections. Each section closes with an exercise. The exercises are meant to reinforce the material presented or introduce new material for investigation. There are appendices at the end of the textbook, which are designed to give additional information about other important areas of morphology.

## Audiences

To achieve its mission, the textbook uses an approachable style and embellishes the presentation with cursory sketches. It uses actual data, offers numerous examples and gives vivid explanations. As a textbook, it targets two classes of audience. Primarily, it targets undergraduate and graduate students taking degree courses in linguistics. It provides them with a thorough discussion of the pivotal issues involved in the study of linguistic morphology. It informs them more fully about such productive processes in word formation in English as derivation and compounding. Secondly, it targets students at English departments. It helps them to expand their vocabulary and understand the conditions under which lexical choices are made. As a guidebook, it targets two classes of audience. First, it targets linguists. Of central significance for them are the cognitive tools employed to account for morphological data. Second, it targets scholars from neighbouring disciplines. Of special interest for them is the description of an area in language study from a new perspective.

## Notes

### To teachers

To make maximum use of the textbook and achieve the goals of the course, teachers should consider two points. Concerning lesson plans, the textbook is organized in such a way that it allows teachers flexibility in designing a morphological course to meet teaching requirements. The textbook is ideal for a one-semester course of 12–14 teaching weeks. In this case, teachers are recommended to cover one chapter per week. However, the recommendations made here can be adjusted to meet different requirements. Teachers are, therefore, free to use the textbook in a way that suits the level of the course they teach and/or the time available. Concerning the data, it is taken exclusively from English. The main source for the choice and analysis of the data is the British National Corpus. The corpus provides exemplary sentences and collocational patterns. However, the general principles discussed here can be extended to apply to other languages. Teachers are, therefore, free to use cross-linguistic data in their lessons. To save time, the following is a possible format of a one-semester course.

Week	Topic	Reading
1	Fundamentals	
2	Cognitive Assumptions	Ch. 1
3	Cognitive Mechanisms	Ch. 2
4	Cognitive Operations	Ch. 3
5	Prefixal Categories	Ch. 4
6	Prefixal Domains	Ch. 5
7	Prefixal Construals	Ch. 6

Week	Topic	Reading
8	Suffixal Categories	Ch. 7
9	Suffixal Domains	Ch. 8
10	Suffixal Construals	Ch. 9
11	Compound Categories	Ch. 10
12	Compound Domains	Ch. 11
13	Compound Construals	Ch. 12
14	Review	

**To students**

The textbook, which is couched within the theory of Cognitive Linguistics, is meant to give students an insight into the nature of English morphology and the principles which govern its mechanism. It does not necessarily presuppose any prior knowledge of linguistics. The definitions which it presents and the distinctions which it suggests should not be taken as a hard-and-fast criterion, but rather as a general rule of thumb. To get a grasp of any section or sub-section, the students are advised to study its content carefully, make a brief summary of it, and then tackle the exercise which it contains. The purpose of this is twofold. First, it attracts attention to the core of the section. Second, it tests comprehension of the material presented. Finally, further reading including bibliographical sources are included at the end of the textbook. The purpose of this is twofold. First, it provides guidance on further reading on the topics covered in the analysis. Second, it acknowledges work which contributed in one way or another to the present discussion.

# Conventions

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- Bold face is used to introduce technical terms at their first occurrence, and thereafter ordinary type face is used unless particular emphasis justifies its repetition.
- Italics are used to cite a word or a sentence as a linguistic example to illustrate the terms.
- Asterisks are used to indicate that a word or an expression is semantically unacceptable.
- Single quotation marks are used to enclose a phrase to indicate the definition of a morpheme or word.
- The mark = is used to indicate that two words or phrases have the same value as each other.
- The mark [ ] is used to represent schemas and semantic structures of derivational morphemes.
- The mark / / is used to represent phonological structures of derivational morphemes.
- The mark ( ) is used to enclose words.
- The mark { } is used to enclose alternatives.



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# Fundamentals

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This textbook is about **morphology**, the study of the form-meaning relationships between lexical units and their arrangement in forming words. This part introduces the basic components of the field of morphology and the necessary processes which it involves. It addresses two concerns. One concern relates to terminology. It introduces the terms used in the study of morphology and defines them in a way that is both concise and precise. The other concern pertains to delimitation. It identifies the scope of the investigation. This part is organized as follows. Section 1 focuses on the issue of what linguistics is and what morphology within linguistics does. Section 2 centres on the terms used in morphology to describe language. Section 3 concentrates on morphological areas. In all the sections, I pursue three steps. First, I introduce the term. Second, I explain its meaning. Third, I devise an exercise to test its application.

## 1 Introduction

In communicating with one another, we use a set of vocal sounds or written marks called language. **Language** is a vehicle for communicating ideas and feelings. The scientific study of language is linguistics. **Linguistics** studies the principles that govern the structure and use of a language. In forming expressions, language users employ the resources provided by the lexicon. The **lexicon** is a language's stock of lexical expressions. It is a language user's knowledge of vocabulary. It contains a set of lexical options which language users are free to choose from in describing their experiences. Any variation in choice reflects a distinction in meaning, which is processed by cognition. **Cognition** is the mental faculty of acquiring knowledge by the use of intuition, perception or reasoning. Relevant to the study of language then is the detection of the motivation behind the choice of lexical items. A **lexical item** is an item of vocabulary which has semantic interpretation and embodies a distinct concept. It may be a single word or a group of words. Investigating the use and meanings of words or word groups is the subject matter of **lexicology**, the study of the lexicon of a language. Exploring the internal structure of words, which is the focus of the present explanation, is the task of **morphology**, the study of

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the form-meaning relationships between lexical units and their arrangement in forming words.

### Exercise 1

Read the following statements and write whether they are true or false. Then, correct the false ones.

1. Language is a dynamic set of auditory or visual symbols of communication.
2. Linguistics studies what language is and how it is represented in the mind.
3. Lexicon is an inventory of all the words in a particular language or subject.
4. Lexicology is concerned with the combination of structures to yield words.
5. Morphology is concerned with the meaning and usage of words as wholes.

## 2 Morphology

As a lexical word, morphology consists of two parts: *morph* referring to ‘form’ and *-ology* referring to ‘study’. As a linguistic term, **morphology** is the study of how words are built of form-meaning units. It studies the ways in which form alterations reflect meaning distinctions. This amounts to saying that the morphological structure of a word mirrors its semantic structure. Morphology is an essential subfield of linguistics. Generally, it aims to describe the structures of words and patterns of word formation in a language. Specifically, it aims to (i) pin down the principles for relating the form and meaning of morphological expressions, (ii) explain how the morphological units are integrated and the resulting formations interpreted, and (iii) show how morphological units are organized in the lexicon in terms of affinity and contrast. The study of morphology uncovers the lexical resources of language, helps speakers to acquire the skills of using them creatively, and consequently express their thoughts and emotions with eloquence.

### 2.1 Word

A fundamental unit with which morphology is concerned is the word and its constituents. A **word** is a symbolic unit which is a combination of meaning and sound. A word like *car*, for example, has two aspects which cannot be separated: the sound image /ka:/ and the concept [CAR], a type of vehicle. Words may be simple, composite or compound. A **simple word**, also known as **monomorphemic**, is composed of only one lexical structure, which is

morphologically indivisible. The word *use*, for example, consists of just one lexical constituent. It is the minimum free form which can stand by itself and act as a meaningful utterance. A **composite word**, also known as **complex** or **polymorphemic**, is composed of two or more substructures which is morphologically divisible, one of which is a word. The word *useful*, for example, is a derivation from the lexical substructures *use* and *-ful*. A **compound word** is composed of two substructures, namely words, which is morphologically divisible. The word *birthday*, for example, is a combination of the lexical substructures *birth* and *day*. Simple, composite and compound words are subsumed under the general term **morphological expression**.

## Exercise 2

Examine the structures of the following morphological expressions and write whether they are simple or composite.

1. jabber -----
2. realize -----
3. modern -----
4. invention -----
5. bookstore -----

## 2.2 Morpheme

A composite word is made up of two or more substructures. The substructures are referred to as morphemes. A **morpheme** is the minimal meaningful unit in a language. It is minimal because it cannot be further divided into smaller units. It is meaningful in that it stands for something conceived in the speaker's mind. Morphemes can be either **free** or **bound**. A **free morpheme** can appear as an independent word, whereas a **bound morpheme** can only appear as part of another word. For example, the word *undress* consists of two morphemes: one is *dress* which is free, the other is *un-* which is bound. Each morpheme contributes to the overall meaning of the composite word. Each morpheme is associated with a certain conceptual representation in the mind of the speaker. A free morpheme can be either a root or a base. A **root** is a word substructure that cannot be decomposed into further elements, as in *move*. A **base** can be decomposed. It consists of a root and a bound morpheme to which a further bound morpheme can be added. The word *movable* functions as a base for a bound morpheme like *in-* to give the new word *immovable*.

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## Exercise 3

Consider the following morphological expressions and segment them into their free and bound morphemes.

	Free	Bound
1. amoral	-----	-----
2. payment	-----	-----
3. boldness	-----	-----
4. misquote	-----	-----
5. nonsense	-----	-----

## 2.3 Allomorph

Some morphemes may have more than one phonemic form, depending on the context in which they occur. These phonemic forms are referred to as allomorphs. An **allomorph** is a variant form of a morpheme which differs only in sound, not in meaning. It is an alternative manifestation of a morpheme which varies in pronunciation according to phonological conditions. In English, for example, the past tense morpheme, usually written as *-ed*, has three phonemic forms, depending on the nature of the preceding sounds. After voiceless sounds other than /t/, it is pronounced /t/ as in *stopped*. After voiced sounds other than /d/, it is pronounced /d/ as in *named*. After the sounds /t/ or /d/, it is pronounced /ɪd/ as in *waited*. The three phonemic forms /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/ are thus considered allomorphs of the past tense morpheme *-ed*. They are said to be in **complementary distribution**, the phenomenon in which linguistic forms have the same meaning but cannot occur in the same environment due to phonological conditions. Each form occupies its own territory and does not trespass on that of another.

## Exercise 4

The negative morpheme *in-* has more than one allomorph. Write the resulting linguistic forms of the following expressions, and then give the phonological conditions which govern their distributions.

1. in + moral	-----	-----
2. in + logical	-----	-----
3. in + correct	-----	-----
4. in + regular	-----	-----
5. in + possible	-----	-----

## 2.4 Characteristics

Free and bound morphemes in English display certain characteristics on both general and individual levels. On the general level, they share two characteristics. First, they are **expressive**. They serve to convey particular meanings. They are attributed semantic values which motivate their morphological behaviour. Their presence adds semantic import to the expressions in which they occur. Second, they may be **polysemous**. They have multiple meanings which are related to one another. They are rich in semantic content. Their meanings are not fixed. They change relative to the contexts in which they occur, which reflect the communicative demands of discourse. On the individual level, they show particular characteristics. As shown below, each type has characteristics which affect its behaviour in the course of forming words. The rest of the book will elaborate on these characteristics through argumentation, exemplification and evidence.

### 2.4.1 Free morphemes

Examining morphological data shows that free morphemes display three characteristics. First, free morphemes often belong to different word classes. For example, the free morpheme *region* is a noun, *serve* is a verb and *legal* is an adjective. When they host bound morphemes, their word classes or parts of speech mostly change, as in *regional* (adjective), *servant* (noun) and *legalise* (verb). Second, free morphemes can combine with more than one bound morpheme horizontally. Each bound morpheme causes a special tinge of meaning. In *informality*, for example, the free morpheme *form* combines with the two final bound morphemes *-al* and *-ity* and the initial bound morpheme *in-*. In *bookcase*, the free morpheme *case* combines with the free morpheme *book*. Third, free morphemes can take two or more bound morphemes vertically. Each bound morpheme brings about an important change in meaning. For example, the free morpheme *continue* can take such bound morphemes as *-al* and *-ous*, resulting in such formations as *continual* and *continuous*. In each formation, the bound morpheme shapes the meaning in a particular way. *Continual* describes separate actions of the same sort which go on with interruption. *Continuous* describes one action that goes on without interruption.

### Exercise 5

Write the parts of speech of the roots and then of the adjacent resulting formations.

# 6 Morphology in English

1. false	-----	falsehood	-----
2. scale	-----	descale	-----
3. break	-----	breakage	-----
4. globe	-----	global	-----
5. sweet	-----	sweeten	-----

## 2.4.2 Bound morphemes

Considering morphological data shows that bound morphemes display three characteristics. First, bound morphemes often have a wide range of application. For example, in *non-cooperation* the bound morpheme *non-* is attached to a noun. In *non-essential*, it is attached to an adjective. In *non-skid*, it is attached to a verb. Second, bound morphemes sometimes express more or less the same meaning and so form semantic sets. For example, the bound morphemes *de-*, *dis-* and *un-* can be used to denote the concept of removal, but each represents a different aspect of it. In *defuse a row*, a thing is removed. In *dispossess a player*, a human is affected. In *unhook a headphone*, an object is removed. Third, bound morphemes occasionally attach to the same roots or occur in the same position. For example, the bound morphemes *non-* and *in-* can attach to the base *rational* to form *non-rational* and *irrational*. Nonetheless, they bring about a change in meaning. They are not in **free variation**, the phenomenon in which two or more linguistic items can occur in the same environment without signalling any change in meaning.

### Exercise 6

Identify the different meanings which the bound morpheme *-er* signals in each of the following morphological expressions.

1. driver	-----
2. buzzer	-----
3. sleeper	-----
4. retriever	-----
5. reminder	-----

## 2.5 Relationships

A composite structure consists of two or more substructures, one of which is free while the other is bound. To describe a situation, the morphemes are chosen in a meaningful way and put together in an organized manner.

The skeleton of a composite structure is governed by two types of relationship. One occurs along a horizontal axis. The other occurs along a vertical axis. The two types of relationship are important in developing one's concept of a composite structure and in shedding light on the dynamic nature of vocabulary building. They facilitate our understanding of the way in which a composite structure is formed. They uncover the way in which the morphemes collocate with each other and how they replace each other in creating a composite structure. They describe the function of the morphemes and reveal how they interact to give a composite structure its identity.

### 2.5.1 Syntagmatic

A syntagmatic relationship is a pattern of relationship between the morphemes of a composite structure in a linear order. It is based on the criterion of juxtaposition, the ability of morphemes to combine horizontally. Bound morphemes can occur before and after a free morpheme simultaneously. A free morpheme like *law*, for example, can take the bound morphemes *un-* and *-ful* to form *unlawful*. The occurrence of the morphemes of a composite structure in sequence has consequences at the lexical and semantic levels. On the lexical level, a syntagmatic relationship between the morphemes of a composite structure helps one to understand their co-occurrence restrictions. For example, the prefix *in-* takes Latinate bases as in *inedible*, whereas the prefix *un-* takes English bases as in *uneatable*. On the semantic level, a syntagmatic relationship between the morphemes of a composite structure helps one to grasp their combinatorial compatibility. For example, the negative prefix *un-* cannot be used with adjectival roots that are negative in meaning as in *\*unsad*. This is so because of the presence of the word *happy* in the lexicon.

## Exercise 7

Arrange the morphemes in each of the following on a syntagmatic level to make a meaningful word.

1. vital, -ise, de- \_\_\_\_\_
2. -al, -ity, origin \_\_\_\_\_
3. throne, en-, dis- \_\_\_\_\_
4. -able, reason, -ness \_\_\_\_\_
5. -ism, colony, -al, neo- \_\_\_\_\_



# 8 Morphology in English

## 2.5.2 Paradigmatic

A paradigmatic relationship is a pattern of relationship between the morphemes of a composite structure in a vertical order. It is based on the criterion of substitution, the ability of morphemes to replace each other vertically within a particular context. The occurrence of the morphemes of a composite structure on a vertical level has some consequences. On the lexical level, a paradigmatic relationship uncovers the speech part or the word class which the selected morphemes belong to. For example, in *burdensome*, *famous* and *amateurish*, the morphemes *-some*, *-ous* and *-ish* are all adjectival. They are added to nominal roots to form adjectives. On the semantic level, a paradigmatic relationship allows morphemes denoting a common concept to be grouped together. For example, the morphemes *pseudo-*, *quasi-* and *semi-* can be used alternately before the base *religious*. Thus, they can be grouped together because they denote the concept of ‘inadequacy’, describing an entity as having nothing or only some of the thing described. Yet, each morpheme has a tinge of meaning that is different from the other. *Pseudo-* describes an entity as being deceptive, false or a sham. *Quasi-* describes an entity as resembling the thing described. *Semi-* describes an entity as having the thing construed but only to some degree.

### Exercise 8

Write the alternating bound morphemes which each of the following roots takes on a paradigmatic level.

- |                |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| 1. tip         | ----- | ----- |
| 2. wood        | ----- | ----- |
| 3. excite      | ----- | ----- |
| 4. fragment    | ----- | ----- |
| 5. communicate | ----- | ----- |

## 3 Study areas

Traditionally, two main areas have been studied within morphology. One area is **word formation**, a lexical process which produces new vocabulary items out of the existing ones. It enables speakers to create new words in response to new thoughts, experiences or situations. For example, the ending *-ity* can be added to the root *equal* to derive the word *equality*. The derived word takes on a new meaning and serves a new purpose. The other area is **inflection**,

a grammatical process which produces forms of the same word. It enables speakers to use words which conform to the rules of grammar. For example, *rings*, *ringing*, *rang* and *rung* are all forms of the word *ring*. Each word takes on a different grammatical form to fit a specific context. In what follows, I present some details of the area of word formation, but make only a sketch of the area of inflection. This is because inflection belongs, from the viewpoint of the present approach, to the province of grammar.

### 3.1 Word formation

Word formation studies the creation of new words and the principles involved in doing so. It involves different processes which are used to build new lexical items from the existing ones. Each word-formation process results in the production of a specific type of word. Word formation is a crucial tool in the hands of speakers because it helps them to create words which symbolize the experiences they encounter in the world. Each word reflects a special conceptualization which represents in turn a different mental experience. In this way, morphology is concerned first and foremost with the processes of forming words, that is, how words are formed from smaller units and how the smaller units interact in speech. In the course of forming words, two major processes take place: **derivation** and **compounding**. These two processes of word formation will be at the core of the remainder of the present discussion. These two powerful processes of forming words are referred to as **concatenation**, the mechanism of building words by the linear addition of morphemes.

#### 3.1.1 Derivation

Derivation is the morphological process of forming a new word from an existing one by the addition of a bound morpheme. Derivation assigns a lexical item a semantic property so that it can fulfil a given discourse function. For example, in *selfish* the bound morpheme *-ish* has a double import. First, it changes the part of speech of the word it derives. It changes its part of speech from a noun *self* into an adjective *selfish*. Second, it affects the meaning of the word it derives. In the example, *-ish* implies disapproval by describing someone as caring only about himself or herself and not about others. However, not every bound morpheme causes a change in word class. The bound morpheme *re-*, for example, derives *rewrite* from *write*, both of which are verbs. Within derivation, there are two branches of morphological process: derivation by **affixation** and derivation by **non-affixation**. Of the

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two branches, **affixation** will be the focus of the book because it is highly productive in the creation of new vocabulary items in the language.

### 3.1.1.1 Affixation

Affixation is the morphological process of deriving a new word by adding an affix, namely a bound morpheme, to a root or base. For example, the verb *endear* is formed by adding the affix *en-* to the adjective *dear*. **Affixes** are bound morphemes which never occur on their own; they have semantic holes in their structure, and so must be joined to other morphemes to fill them. Affixes can function as derivational morphemes. A **derivational morpheme** is an affix by means of which one word is derived from another. All affixes change the meaning of the **derivative**, the word which results from derivation. Some affixes change the word class of the root as in the adjective *expensive* from the noun *expense*. Others do not change the word class of the root as in the noun *childhood* from the noun *child*. Affixation comprises two modes: prefixation and suffixation. **Prefixation** is the morphological process of forming a new word by attaching a bound morpheme to the front of a free morpheme. For example, the verb *disagree* is formed by adding the negative prefix *dis-* to the root *agree*. **Suffixation** is the morphological process of forming a new word by attaching a bound morpheme to the end of a free morpheme. For example, the adjective *agreeable* is formed by adding the suffix *-able* to the root *agree*.

### Exercise 9

State the mode of affixation, prefixation or suffixation, which is involved in the creation of the following morphological expressions.

1. subplot           -----
2. stardom           -----
3. anti-war           -----
4. heighten           -----
5. tiresome           -----

### 3.1.1.2 Non-affixation

Non-affixation is the morphological process of coining a new word by using a set of morphological devices. **Acronymy** is a morphological device in which a new word is coined from the initial letters of other words, usually pronounced as such, as in UNESCO from *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural*

**Organisation.** **Initialism** is a morphological device in which the initial letters of words are used as an abbreviation for a name or an expression, usually pronounced separately, as in EU from *European Union*. **Back formation** is a morphological device whereby a new word is coined from an existing one by removing actual or supposed affixes, as in *burgle* which is formed by deleting the suffix *-ar* from *burglar*. **Blending** is a morphological device by which a new word is coined by combining parts of two words, usually the first part of one with the last part of another, as in *smog* from *smoke* and *fog*. **Clipping** is a morphological device whereby a new word is coined by retaining only one of its parts: the beginning as in *lab* from *laboratory*, the end as in *plane* from *aeroplane*, or the middle as in *flu* from *influenza*. **Reduplication** is a morphological device by which a new word is coined by repeating the entire of the word or part of it: full as in *bye-bye*, partial as in *willy-nilly*, and ablaut as in *ping-pong*. **Conversion** is a morphological device wherein a new word is coined from an existing word by a change in its part of speech, as in the verb *to house* from the noun *house*, or in its stress, as in the verb *fre'quent* from the adjective *'frequent*. From the standpoint of the present explanation, conversion belongs to the area of phonology. This is so because it involves neither a change in form nor a change in arrangement of substructures.

## Exercise 10

State the devices of non-affixation used in forming the following morphological expressions. Then, give the originals from which they are formed.

- |          |       |       |
|----------|-------|-------|
| 1. ad    | ----- | ----- |
| 2. edit  | ----- | ----- |
| 3. VIP   | ----- | ----- |
| 4. motel | ----- | ----- |
| 5. NATO  | ----- | ----- |

### 3.1.2 Compounding

Compounding, also called **composition**, is the morphological process of forming a complex structure by combining two, or more, free morphemes, of same or different word classes. The resulting form which serves to convey a new message is called a **compound**, a complex structure made up of more than one free morpheme. The first or left-hand free morpheme modifies the second or right-hand free morpheme. The first free morpheme usually receives primary **stress**, the relative prominence with which a syllable is pronounced in

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a word, and is not marked for **number**, the grammatical category of a word that expresses count distinctions. The second or right-hand free morpheme usually determines the word class of the compound. The second free morpheme usually receives secondary stress and is marked for number. For example, the expression *homework* is considered a compound. It is composed of the substructures *home* and *work*, both of which are free morphemes before the compounding process takes place. The free morpheme *home* functions as the modifier, whereas the free morpheme *work* functions as the head.

## Exercise 11

Match the modifiers in column A with the heads in column B so as to form new compounds.

A	B	
1. note	ware	-----
2. soft	book	-----
3. duty	chair	-----
4. chain	free	-----
5. swivel	smoke	-----

## 3.2 Inflection

Inflection is a grammatical process which produces alternative forms of the same lexeme. Unlike the area of word formation which yields different words, the area of inflection yields different forms of the same lexeme. A **lexeme** is a unit of lexical meaning which can take a set of inflectional endings. For example, *show*, *shows*, *showing* and *showed* are different forms of the lexeme *show*. The set of the inflected forms which a lexeme assumes is called **paradigm**. Inflection assigns the form a grammatical property so that it can fit a given syntactic slot. For example, the words *book* and *books* are different forms of the same lexeme. They differ only in number, in which the inflectional morpheme *-s* serves the grammatical function of plurality. It does not change its part of speech as both are nouns. English has several inflectional endings: plural as in *boys*, possessive as in *boy's*, comparative as in *taller*, superlative as in *tallest*, present as in *walks*, past as in *walked*, past participle as in *written*, present participle as in *writing*, and adverb as in *slowly*. The area of inflection is part of grammar, and is therefore outside the scope of the present explanation.

Some inflectional endings, however, acquire characteristics of derivational morphemes. These include *-ed*, *-en*, *-er*, *-ing* and *-ly*. To make this clear, let us take an example. The morpheme *-er* can function both as an inflectional morpheme and as a derivational morpheme. As an inflectional morpheme, *-er* is attached to adjectives to show the comparative as in *hotter*, describing something as having a higher temperature. In this use, the morpheme expresses a difference in degree or quality. As a derivational morpheme, *-er* is highly productive in forming new nouns. In this use, the morpheme expresses mainly agenthood. It is attached to verbal roots to form nouns as in *camper*, describing someone who performs the action indicated by the verb. It is attached to adjectival roots to form nouns as in *teenager*, describing someone as having the quality denoted by the adjective. It is attached to nominal roots to form nouns as in *freighter*, describing a large ship or aircraft designed for carrying goods.

## Exercise 12

Determine whether the function of the italicized morphemes in the following morphological expressions is inflectional or derivational.

1. She pleased everyone at the party. -----  
She gave a pleased smile to them. -----
2. She has written a message to him. -----  
She has read the written message. -----
3. Jack is considered a tough player. -----  
Jack is tougher than he looks. -----
4. The film is disturbing the viewers. -----  
The film contains disturbing scenes. -----
5. She has kindly offered to help them. -----  
She is considered a kindly old lady. -----

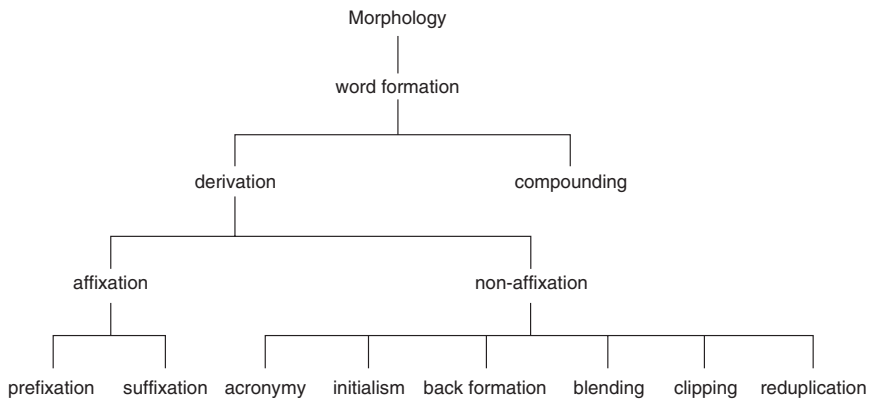
## Summary

In this chapter, I presented a broad outline of what morphology is and what it covers. **Morphology** is the study of the patterns which describe the arrangement of morphemes in forming new words. In the outline, I did two things. First, I introduced the key notions which are necessary in the analysis of morphological data and essential for an understanding of morphological structure. One key notion is the **morpheme**, the minimal linguistic unit in a

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language which has a semantic value. Morphemes are of two types. A **free morpheme** can appear as an independent word. A **bound morpheme** can only appear as part of another word. Second, I delimited the scope of the discussion, and identified the phenomena that morphologists study. The core area dealt with is **word formation**, a set of processes used for the creation of new words. It involves two subareas. One subarea is **derivation**, the morphological process of forming a new word by means of affixes. Derivation includes both **prefixation**, the morphological process of forming a new word by means of a prefix; and **suffixation**, the morphological process of forming a new word by means of a suffix. The other subarea is **compounding**, the morphological process of combining two free morphemes to form a composite structure.

In Figure 1, I present a sketch of morphology and the areas that are involved in its study.



**Figure 1** An outline of morphology

# Part I

## Framework

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Part I introduces the new framework of linguistic analysis, named **Cognitive Morphology**: a branch of linguistics which studies the cognitive aspects of word formation. I propose this framework to throw a new light on the structures of words. To achieve this goal, the framework draws on insights from two linguistic methods. One is theoretical, which is based on Cognitive Linguistics in general and Cognitive Grammar in particular. This provides the assumptions which allow one to account for intricacies of morphological structures and solve the puzzles surrounding their uses. The other is empirical, which is based on Corpus Linguistics. This provides the tools which allow one to come up with descriptions of morphological structures as expressed in actual usage. Part I is the foundation stone on which the rest of the textbook is built. It includes three chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the cognitive assumptions. Chapter 2 discusses the cognitive mechanisms. Chapter 3 addresses the cognitive operations.

In broad terms, the proposed framework is based on **Cognitive Linguistics**, a cluster of approaches to the study of language which has developed since the 1980s. Underlying the Cognitive Linguistics approach are a number of basic ideas. First, it focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing and conveying information. It considers, therefore, all language structures as being at the service of this function. Second, it explains language creation, learning and usage by reference to concepts formed in the mind. It seeks, therefore, to hinge descriptions of linguistic patterns on the mental operations carried out by the human brain. Third, it attaches central importance to meaning, which is embodied in experience and explained with reference to human cognition. It aims, therefore, to characterize how the human mind understands the world and encodes that understanding in language. In this approach, linguistic abilities are inseparable from general cognitive abilities, and there is no definite boundary between linguistic meaning and general knowledge.

In specific terms, the proposed framework is based on **Cognitive Grammar**, an approach to linguistic structure which has been devised by Ronald



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Langacker. Cognitive Grammar is based on a number of claims. One claim is that language is symbolic in nature. It resides in associations of phonological and semantic structures. It tries, therefore, to clarify the interaction between form and meaning in the make-up of linguistic expressions. Another claim is that grammatical structure does not assume any underlying structure. Rather, it is entirely overt and represents a means for carrying semantic content. It attempts, therefore, to describe the cognitive principles that motivate the formation and use of linguistic expressions of varying degrees of complexity. A further claim is that grammar is usage-based. Knowledge of language is based on actual usage. It is dynamic and evolves in accordance with speakers' experiences. It tries, therefore, to explain language structure by generalizing from specific linguistic forms taken from empirical data.

# Cognitive Assumptions

---

Chapter 1 presents the cognitive assumptions on which I build the morphological analysis. The assumptions relate to three important issues: the way linguistic units are formed, the way their internal structures combine and the way the resulting formations are interpreted. The aim is to show how adept the assumptions are in accounting for morphological data and tackling morphological problems. The chapter includes five sections. Section 1.1 covers symbolicity. Section 1.2 concerns conventionality. Section 1.3 deals with creativity. Section 1.4 pertains to authenticity. Section 1.5 relates to semanticity. In all the sections, I pursue three steps. First, I present the assumption and elaborate on its essence. Second, I enumerate its consequences and touch upon its impact on the analysis of morphological expressions. Third, I devise exercises to validate the applicability of its consequences.

## 1.1 Symbolicity

In the cognitive model of language, grammar is viewed as being symbolic in nature. **Symbolicity** is the quality of linguistic units being associated with meaning. It is a structured inventory of linguistic units. A **unit** means any simple or composite expression which is frequently used and thoroughly mastered, thus acquiring the status of a habit or a cognitive routine. **Inventory** means a detailed list of all the linguistic resources which speakers exploit in constructing units. **Structured** means that the units are related to one another in organized ways. A linguistic unit consists of a semantic structure, a phonological structure and a symbolic structure linking them. The phonological structure refers to form, which can be spoken or written. The semantic structure refers to meaning, which is related to a concept. A **concept** is a thought or notion formed in the mind, which is symbolized in language by means of phonological structures. The linkage between the phonological and semantic structures is not arbitrary. Rather, it is motivated by the manner in which speakers interact with the world. A lexical expression like *cheesy*, for example, is regarded as an association between the phonological structure /'tʃi:zi/ and the semantic structure [CHEESY], which is realized by the graphic symbols.

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The use of the bound morpheme *-y* is motivated by the idea of likening something to *cheese*.

For morphology, the cognitive assumption of symbolicity has three significant consequences.

- Morphological expressions are bipolar. They have two poles: phonological and semantic. The act of mating the phonological and semantic poles is referred to as **pairing**. The pairing is motivated by discourse demands or communicative purposes. The phonological pole symbolizes the semantic pole. The form and meaning equally contribute to the make-up of the resulting formation. The two poles are thus inseparable. See, for example, the morpheme *-ity* in *civility*. It is a symbolic structure linking the phonological structure /iti/ with the semantic structure [ITY], expressing the state of being civil.

## Exercise 1.1

Identify the phonological and semantic structures of the following derivational morphemes and the ideas which they express.

1. iso-	/-----/	[-----]	-----
2. eco-	/-----/	[-----]	-----
3. -itis	/-----/	[-----]	-----
4. hydro-	/-----/	[-----]	-----
5. -ology	/-----/	[-----]	-----

- Morphological expressions have semantic values which motivate their linguistic form. The semantic value is a reflection of a particular concept. A **concept** is a general idea that exists in the mind as a product of mental activity or awareness. The meaning of a morphological expression is, therefore, shaped by the idea conceived in the mind of the language user. Take, for example, the bound morpheme *crypto-*. It means ‘hidden or secret’. It is used by the language user to describe an entity as being not openly avowed or declared. A *crypto-coalition* is a coalition which is made in secret.

## Exercise 1.2

Identify and write the meanings of the derivational morphemes in the following morphological expressions.

1. aeroplane	-----	-----
2. egomania	-----	-----
3. spacecraft	-----	-----
4. transatlantic	-----	-----
5. infrastructure	-----	-----

- Morphological expressions are neither integrated at random nor conditioned by formal rules. The integration of the subparts of a composite structure is governed by valence determinants. **Valence** is the capacity of two structures to combine. One significant determinant resides in the phonological and semantic compatibility between the subparts of an expression. It is the correspondence between the form of a morphological expression and its meaning. Consider, for example, a free morpheme like *forty*. To mean about 40 years old, it needs to be integrated with the bound morpheme *-ish*, which denotes approximation.

### Exercise 1.3

Choose from the list of affixes the one that integrates with the root and write the resulting formation.

1. bribe	-ry	-ship	-hood	-----
2. septic	in-	mal-	a-	-----
3. block	mega-	super-	hyper-	-----
4. youth	-ous	-ful	-ly	-----
5. example	-ise	-ify	-ate	-----

## 1.2 Conventionality

In the cognitive theory of language, grammar consists of units which are conventional in nature. **Conventionality** is the quality of linguistic units being established in the lexicon through repeated uses. The majority of the units are organized by schema-instance relations. A **schema** is a general pattern which is extracted from actual instances. It is a mental representation with a general meaning, whose specifics are elaborated by its instances in contrasting ways. The schema is used to coin and understand novel expressions. **Instances** are specific units which represent situations or events. They are regarded as the basis on which schemas are built. In the light of the cognitive view, grammar

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consists of both general patterns and specific units. Even though language users extract the general patterns from the specific units, they store in memory the specific ones, thus creating redundancy in their linguistic knowledge. Schemas display different properties. They are variable in the sense that they allow for a range of values. They are flexible in the sense that they are liable to change through use. They are encyclopaedic in the sense that they capture various types of experience. The schema [FURNITURE], for example, is extracted from and elaborated by such words as *beds*, *chairs*, *cupboards*, *sofas*, *tables*, and so on.

For morphology, the assumption of conventionality has three significant ramifications.

- Morphological expressions qualify as conventional units, demonstrating a schema-instance relationship. The **schema** of a derivational morpheme is a general pattern which expresses the common properties of its senses, and acts as a template for coining new words. Let us cite an example. On the basis of such instances as *enable*, *enfeeble*, *enrich*, and so on, the schema [EN-] can be formed. Once it is formed, the schema acts as a pattern for deriving new words in the language such as *encamp*, *enforce*, *engulf*, and so on. In the first set of instances, *en-* is added to adjectival roots to form verbs, whereas in the second it is added to nominal roots to form verbs.

Exercise 1.4

Give three elaborations for the following morphological schemas, using a root of a different word class each time.

	Noun	Adjective	Verb
1. [DIS-]	-----	-----	-----
2. [UN-]	-----	-----	-----
3. [BE-]	-----	-----	-----
4. [-IFY]	-----	-----	-----
5. [-ISM]	-----	-----	-----

- Morphological expressions are polysemous and compose complex categories. A **category** is a network of senses of a derivational morpheme which is structured in terms of prototype and periphery. The **prototype** is the central sense or the most salient example. The periphery comprises the remaining senses, which are linked to the prototype via semantic extensions. Let us offer

an example. The bound morpheme *mini-* forms a category. Prototypically, it is added to roots referring to concrete nouns as in *mini-bus*. Peripherally, it is added to roots referring to abstract nouns as in *mini-lecture*.

### Exercise 1.5

Pick out the word that contains in your view the prototype of the derivational morpheme in the following morphological expressions.

1. co-	co-author	co-pilot	coexist	-----
2. pro-	pro-family	pro-consul	pro-phase	-----
3. arch-	archbishop	archenemy	archconservative	-----
4. trans-	trans-plant	trans-finite	transatlantic	-----
5. extra-	extra-large	extra-special	extra-marital	-----

- Morphological expressions are related to one another in such a way that they gather in cognitive domains. A **domain** is a knowledge structure in terms of which derivational morphemes can be characterized. To understand the meaning of a single derivational morpheme, one has to understand the domain in which it occurs and in which it highlights a specific facet. Let us consider an example. The bound morphemes *mono-*, *bi-*, *tri-*, *quad-*, *penta-*, and so on can be gathered under the domain of quantification. Yet, each morpheme occupies a different facet of the domain, and so denotes a different number.

### Exercise 1.6

Name the domains to which the derivational morphemes in the following sets of morphological expressions belong.

1. hostess	heroine	usherette	-----
2. kinsfolk	mankind	filmdom	-----
3. archbishop	vice-captain	under-manager	-----
4. mono-lingual	multi-cultural	poly-phonic	-----
5. autobiography	co-ownership	pan-continental	-----

## 1.3 Creativity

In the cognitive approach to language, grammar is considered the product of the creativity of its speakers. **Creativity** is the ability of language users to

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coin a novel expression from a conventional expression, or construe the same situation in alternate ways using different linguistic expressions. The use of a novel expression involves creativity because the speaker has to find an already existing expression or pattern in the language on the basis of which the new expression can be produced. This is referred to as **analogy**, the formation of a new word on the basis of a unique expression or pattern. Likewise, the use of a novel expression involves creativity because the speaker has to establish linkage between the situation conceptualized and the linguistic form chosen. Creativity has a two-fold import. It helps one to understand the variation in the responses to a given situation by a group of speakers. It helps one to understand the variation in the responses given to a given situation by a single speaker, which is influenced by experience. In the cognitive view, language is an integral part of human cognition. Consequently, the speaker is endowed with mental abilities which facilitate conveying new meanings or communicating new ideas. For example, on the basis of a word like *play-mate*, the speaker creates words like *classmate*, *flatmate*, *roommate*, *workmate*, and so on.

For morphology, the assumption of creativity has three significant repercussions.

- Morphological expressions are the outcome of **cognitive operations**, processes which describe capabilities of the mind or functions of the brain in producing and interpreting morphological expressions. Mental abilities include general operations like derivation and compounding within which particular ones like categorization, configuration and conceptualization take place. To take a concrete example, from a word like *neo-baroque*, in which *neo-* means ‘new’ or ‘recent’, expressions such as *neo-classical*, *neo-colonialism*, *neo-fascist*, *neo-populism*, *neo-realist*, and so on have been derived.

## Exercise 1.7

Analogous to the formation of the following examples, create two words using the attached morphemes. Then, give the meanings of the morphemes.

- |               |       |       |       |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. pesticide  | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 2. telephone  | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 3. landscape  | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 4. equimolar  | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 5. workaholic | ----- | ----- | ----- |

- Morphological expressions embody different construals which speakers employ to describe situations. **Construal** is the ability to conceive and express a situation in different ways. Morphological expressions differ in meaning depending not only on the entities they designate but also on the construals employed to describe the scenes. Construal allows the speaker to describe the same content in different ways. To offer a concrete example, the free morpheme *person* can take such bound morphemes as *-able* and *-al*. In each formation, the scene is construed differently. *Personable* means ‘showing personality’, whereas *personal* means ‘relating to a person’.

### Exercise 1.8

In the following morphological expressions, the morpheme *graph* is construed as a different form of writing. Describe what each means.

1. telegraph -----
2. autograph -----
3. holograph -----
4. pictograph -----
5. monograph -----

- Morphological expressions are not synonymous even if they share the same source. **Synonymy** refers to the state of equivalence in meaning. Rather than being regarded as substitutes, morphological expressions are attributed distinct meanings. Each morphological expression is a vehicle of a certain message. To give a concrete example, the root *continue* takes both *-al* and *-ous*, but with a difference in meaning. *Continual* describes separate actions of the same sort which go on with interruption, whereas *continuous* describes one action that goes on without interruption.

### Exercise 1.9

The following morphological expressions share the root *vary*, but they are not synonymous. How would you distinguish between them?

1. varied -----
2. variant -----
3. various -----
4. varying -----
5. variable -----



## 1.4 Authenticity

In the cognitive study of language, grammar, that is, knowledge of language, is authentic. **Authenticity** is the quality of linguistic units being real or true, conforming to fact and therefore worthy of belief. Grammar is derived from language use or grounded in utterances. **Utterances** are actual instances of language, which represent usage events. A **usage event** is an actual utterance used to serve a particular purpose in communication. In terms of structure, an utterance may consist of a single word like *disbelief*, a phrase like *utter disbelief*, or a sentence like *She shook her head in disbelief*. Utterances are recorded in a **corpus**, a large amount of written or spoken data collected to show the state of a language. Theoretically, corpus provides actual, non-elicited and spontaneous data. It can thus help one to make accurate observations about the real state of language. Practically, corpus provides important techniques for language description. It can thus help one to work out meaning differences between lexical expressions. One such technique is **collocation**, the habitual co-occurrence of words. It serves to allocate a semantic value to a searched-for word. For example, collocations of *sensual* describe something as appealing to the body, as in *They were impressed by the sensual movements of the dancer*, whereas collocations of *sensuous* describe something as appealing to the mind as in *They appreciated the sensuous music of the concert*.

For morphology, the cognitive assumption of authenticity has three significant effects.

- Morphological expressions include utterances representing actual occurrences uttered in communicative interaction. A morphological **utterance** is a spoken or written expression. The speaker's knowledge of morphological expressions is based on their situated instances of use. Morphological expressions are dynamic, subject to creative extension. A good example is offered by the utterance *Prevent is better than cure*, in which its first word does not conform to acceptable **usage**, the customary rules that govern written and spoken language. The right form should be the noun *Prevention*.

### Exercise 1.10

Fill in the blanks of the following utterances with the correct usage of the words between brackets.

- |  |        |             |
|--|--------|-------------|
| 1. In truth, she needed time to recover her          | -----. | (compose)   |
| 2. More care should be taken to avoid                | -----. | (interpret) |
| 3. An Olympic silver medal is a remarkable           | -----. | (achieve)   |
| 4. The state is suffering from a period of political | -----. | (stable)    |
| 5. The existing regulations are outmoded and         | -----. | (burden)    |

- Morphological expressions have substance and use. The **substance** consists of two parts, form and meaning. The form is the phonological representation. The meaning is the idea conventionally associated with it. The **use** is the way the language user construes the content. The substance is activated as a response to language use. A clear example is afforded by the adjectival pair *triumphal* and *triumphant*. Both adjectives derive from the root *triumph*, but they are far apart in use. In describing events, the adjective *triumphal* is used, whereas in describing people the adjective *triumphant* is used.

### Exercise 1.11

Each of the following italicized morphological expressions violates correct usage. Write the correct expression.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. An accused person at court is a <i>defender</i> .      | ----- |
| 2. A person who forgets things is <i>forgettable</i> .    | ----- |
| 3. A person who avoids arguments is <i>peaceful</i> .     | ----- |
| 4. The microbe causing the illness is <i>infectious</i> . | ----- |
| 5. They refused to declare a state of <i>emergence</i> .  | ----- |

- Morphological expressions can be adequately described by analysing their surroundings, which significantly affect their meanings. One such surrounding is **collocation**, the case when two or more words go together and form a common expression. A simple example is supplied by the pair *triumphal* and *triumphant*. The adjective *triumphal* describes events, and so collocates with words such as *march*, *parade*, *pomp*, *procession*, *show*, and so on. The adjective *triumphant* describes people, and so collocates with words such as *army*, *force*, *marcher*, *team*, *troop*, and so on.

### Exercise 1.12

Give two noun collocations which help to distinguish between the following morphological pairs.

1. tragic	-----	-----	tragic	-----	-----
2. recital	-----	-----	recitation	-----	-----
3. occupant	-----	-----	occupier	-----	-----
4. luxurious	-----	-----	luxuriant	-----	-----
5. unrepairable	-----	-----	irrepairable	-----	-----

## 1.5 Semanticity

In the cognitive view of language, grammar is inherently meaningful. **Semanticity** is the ability of linguistic units, be they simple phrases or complete sentences, to convey meaning by means of symbols. Meaning is equated with conceptualization. Meaning reflects not only the content of a situation, but also how the speaker describes that content in alternative ways. Meaning is conveyed in spoken or written discourse. Written discourse is represented in texts. A **text** is a body of spoken or written material which represents an extended unit of language. The meaning of a text can be derived from the context in which it occurs. **Context** is the part of a discourse surrounding an expression which disambiguates its meaning. Context accounts for two phenomena. One is **ambiguity**, the case when one and the same expression can be interpreted in more than one way. For example, the expression *killer* has two interpretations. It can refer to a person as in *They found the killer*, or a thing as in *Cancer is a killer*. Another is **rivalry**, the case when two or more affixes or lexical expressions occur in the same environment but convey different messages. Both *-ish* and *-y* attach to the root *freak*, which means ‘strange or odd’, but each has a different meaning. *Freakish* describes character as in *She dislikes freakish visitors*, whereas *freaky* describes appearance as in *She dislikes freaky clothes*.

For morphology, the cognitive assumption of semanticity has three significant corollaries.

- Morphological expressions occur in texts. A **text** is a type of spoken or written discourse. No matter whether the text is narrative, procedural, expository or descriptive, it is important because it provides the clues which enable speakers to learn the use of the right expression, and subsequently send the right message. A striking example is the text *A person who is in a state of not being trusted or respected falls into -----*. To complete its meaning, the text requires the use of the word *disrepute*.

**Exercise 1.13**

Using suitable derivational morphemes, write the correct forms of the bracketed words to complete the definitions in the following texts.

1. A utensil used for separating liquid from solid is a ----- (strain)
2. A secret plan by people to do something illegal is a ----- (conspire)
3. Money given to help a person or an organization is a ----- (donate)
4. Someone who is paid to work for someone else is an ----- (employ)
5. Someone or something that is strange and unusual is an ----- (odd)

- Morphological expressions occur in contexts. **Context** is the environment in which an utterance is used. It is the best evidence available in accounting for the multiple meanings of an expression. It shows that the meaning of an expression is not fixed, but changes relative to the demands of discourse. A telling example is the expression *cleaner*, which has two meanings. In *He has an evening job as an office cleaner*, the expression *cleaner* refers to a person whose job is to clean places. In *We have run out of floor cleaner*, the expression *cleaner* refers to a substance used for cleaning objects.

**Exercise 1.14**

The following expressions have two meanings. Try and provide the contexts which set their meanings apart in use.

1. reader -----
2. uncover -----
3. organizer -----
4. changeable -----
5. woman doctor -----

- Morphological expressions sharing a common source are different in meaning. They exhibit **rivalry**, where bound morphemes attach to the same root but profile distinct aspects of its meaning. The resulting alternatives are phonologically distinct and semantically dissimilar. Any alternation in form spells an alternation in meaning. A revealing example is the pair *childish* and *childlike*. Both derive from the root *child*, but they have different uses which are shown by the bound morphemes. In *childish*, *-ish* describes a person as being immature, irrational and impatient. In *childlike*, *-like* describes a person as being innocent, fresh and honest.

## Exercise 1.15

Single out the correct rival morpheme to complete the root in each sentence, which conveys the construal intended by the speaker.

1. The argument is force  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} ful \\ ible \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ , but the act is forc  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} ful \\ ible \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ .
2. There is devia  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} nce \\ tion \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$  in price, and devia  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} nce \\ tion \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$  in crime.
3. The impulse is prim  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} al \\ ary \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ , but the method is prim  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} al \\ ary \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ .
4. They  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} dis \\ mis \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$  use power, and the bridge fell into  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} dis \\ mis \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$  use.
5. The principle is regulat  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} ive \\ ory \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ , but the policy is regulat  $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} ive \\ ory \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ .

## Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the basic assumptions of **Cognitive Grammar** which provide the theoretical basis for the analysis. The aim was to show how capable the assumptions are in describing morphological data or tackling morphological problems. Five assumptions were presented. The first deals with **symbolicity**, the quality of morphological units being associated with meaning. Morphological units act as symbols to convey meaning. A symbol is something visible (form) that by association represents something else that is invisible (meaning). The second has to do with **conventionality**, the quality of morphological units being established in the lexicon through repeated uses. Morphological units are conventional in nature. They conform to accepted standards, and so are accepted by a speech community. The third relates to **creativity**, the ability of language users to coin a novel expression from a conventional expression, or construe the same situation in alternate ways using different morphological expressions. The fourth pertains to **authenticity**, the quality of morphological units being real or true. Authentic language is the language which people use in real life. The last concerns **semanticity**, the ability of morphological units to convey meaning by means of symbols. All morphological units are attributed semantic values which motivate their behaviour.

Table 1.1 presents a summary of the cognitive assumptions and their implications for morphological expressions.

**Table 1.1** Cognitive assumptions

Cognitive assumptions	
Assumption	Ingredients
symbolicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– morphological expressions are pairings of meaning and form</li> <li>– morphological expressions reflect concepts in the speaker's mind</li> <li>– morphological expressions are integrated by valence determinants</li> </ul>
conventionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– morphological expressions are captured by constructional schemas</li> <li>– morphological expressions form networks of interrelated senses</li> <li>– morphological expressions gather together in cognitive domains</li> </ul>
creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– morphological expressions are products of human mental operations</li> <li>– morphological expressions embody alternative construals of a content</li> <li>– morphological expressions are non-synonymous in their alternation</li> </ul>
authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– morphological expressions are instances of actual language use</li> <li>– morphological expressions have substance (form-meaning) and use</li> <li>– morphological expressions exhibit different collocational patterns</li> </ul>
semanticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– morphological expressions occur in texts, providing clues for their usages</li> <li>– morphological expressions occur in contexts, accounting for their meanings</li> <li>– morphological expressions exhibit rivalry, profiling diverse meaning aspects</li> </ul>

# Cognitive Mechanisms

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Chapter 2 discusses the cognitive mechanisms by which the construction and interpretation of composite words is done. The aim is to introduce the tools of the cognitive framework and explore how they account for intricacies of morphological expressions. The chapter consists of two sections. Section 2.1 relates to the way the parts are integrated to form a composite structure. In four subsections, four pivotal determinants are presented. These are correspondence, dependence, determinacy and constituency. Section 2.2 is concerned with the way the resulting composite structure is interpreted. In two subsections, two essential principles are presented. One is the compositionality of composite structures. The other is the interpretability of composite structures. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I present the determinant. Second, I apply it to morphology. Third, I test its applicability.

## 2.1 Integration

Integration is the combination of morphological items into a linear sequence. It resides in the notion of **valence**, the mechanism whereby two grammatical units combine to form a composite unit. The integration of the component subparts in a grammatical construction depends on the sharing of some features between them. The presence versus absence of these features often has striking consequences for the semantic value and the grammatical behaviour of the construction. In the sphere of morphology, the notion of valence can be applied in a similar fashion. In Cognitive Morphology, the analysis of a composite structure is a matter of the conceptual integration of its component substructures. The component substructures are not the building blocks out of which a composite structure is assembled, but function instead to motivate selected facets of its meaning. The integration of the participating substructures in a composite structure is affected by the following four determinants.

### 2.1.1 Correspondence

Two substructures can be integrated to form a composite structure only if they have certain elements in common at both semantic and phonological levels.

A **composite structure** is formed by unifying corresponding substructures which overlap conceptually. Typically, one substructure corresponds to, and serves to elaborate a semantic entity within the other. Let us apply this determinant to a morphological expression by taking an example. The composite structure *observer* is composed of the two component substructures *observe* and *-er*. The integration of the two substructures is affected by correspondences established between them. Phonologically, the substructure *-er*, when used agentively, makes schematic reference to a process, which is elaborated by *observe*. Semantically, the substructure *-er* denotes an agent which corresponds to the process designated by the substructure *observe*. By unifying the two corresponding processes, one obtains the composite structure *observer*. As a noun, *observer* refers to a person who watches an event.

Exercise 2.1

Match the bound morphemes in column B with the free morphemes in column A and write the result in column C.

A	B	C
1. soft	-free	-----
2. care	-some	-----
3. flow	-ism	-----
4. loath	semi-	-----
5. vandal	contra-	-----

In combining two substructures, one substructure sometimes forces a change in the specification of the other. In addition to meaning, the change involves some kind of morphological and/or phonological marking. This is referred to as **coercion**, the phenomenon in which a substructure brings about a change in the specification of a neighbouring substructure when they combine to form a composite structure. Derivational morphemes affect not only the semantic character of the root but they also determine at least some of the phonological properties of the composite structure. Derivational morphemes in English can be divided into two broad categories: those that coerce the root with which they combine and those that do not. An example of a coercive derivational morpheme is the adjective-forming suffix *-ive*, which changes, in the derivation of some words, the phonological shape of the root, as in *permissive* from *permit*. An example of a non-coercive derivational morpheme is the adjective-forming suffix *-ly*, where the phonological shape of the root remains unchanged, as in *lovely* from *love*.



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## Exercise 2.2

The following expressions exhibit coercion effects. Add the derivational morphemes to the roots and write the resulting formations.

- 1. divide + ible -----
- 2. compel + ory -----
- 3. submit + ion -----
- 4. suspect + ous -----
- 5. dis + encourage -----

## 2.1.2 Dependence

In making a composite structure, one of the two component substructures qualifies as **autonomous** (A) and the other as **dependent** (D). A exists on its own without need of D to complete its meaning, whereas D is dependent on A to complete its meaning to the extent that A constitutes a salient substructure within D, or fills the hole that D has. The hole in the D substructure is called an **elaboration site**, or briefly **e-site**. The A substructure elaborates the e-site, which is a salient subpart within the semantic structure of the D substructure. Let us apply this determinant to the example of *observer*. As a noun, *observer* shows an A/D asymmetry. The free morpheme *observe* represents the A substructure. Phonologically, it can exist as a fully autonomous form. Semantically, it can exist as a fully acceptable unit. It is possible to conceptualize it without making any necessary reference to anything outside the concept itself. By contrast, the bound morpheme *-er* represents the D substructure. Phonologically, it cannot exist as an autonomous form. Semantically, it cannot exist as a fully acceptable unit. It has to attach itself to a host of an appropriate kind, which elaborates a salient subpart within its semantic structure and adds specifications to it. Accordingly, bound morphemes act as dependent substructures.

## Exercise 2.3

Separate the autonomous (A) and dependent (D) morphemes in the following morphological expressions.

- |            | A     | D     |
|------------|-------|-------|
| 1. orderly | ----- | ----- |
| 2. robbery | ----- | ----- |

3. pedantic	-----	-----
4. magician	-----	-----
5. malpractice	-----	-----

2.1.3 Determinacy

A composite structure consists of two or more substructures. Of the two or more substructures, one lends its profile to the entire composite structure. This substructure is called the **profile determinant**, traditionally known as the **head**. It is that element in a construction which is central because it is primarily responsible for the character of the construction, and because it is in syntactic and semantic relationship with the other elements. On applying this determinant to the composite structure *observer*, we find that the free morpheme *observe* signifies an action, whereas the bound morpheme *-er* signifies a thing. The composite structure as a whole signifies a thing in the sense that it describes an entity, referring to a person who observes something. This is so because the bound morpheme *-er* is the key substructure in that it lends its profile to the entire composite structure. The free morpheme *observe* is describable as one whose profile is overridden by that of the profile determinant *-er*. Both the free and bound morphemes are crucial to the meaning of *observer*, but the bound morpheme which acts as the profile determinant is much more prominent.

Two component substructures can be integrated with the head: either a complement or a modifier. A **complement** is an autonomous substructure that elaborates a schematic entity in the semantic structure of the dependent head. It adds intrinsic conceptual substance to the profile determinant. In the derived expression *observer*, for instance, the substructure *-er* is the profile determinant, whereas the substructure *observe* is its complement. A **modifier**, by contrast, is a dependent substructure that has a schematic entity in its semantic structure which is elaborated by the profile determinant. It adds non-intrinsic specifications to the profile determinant. In the compound expression *football*, for instance, the noun *ball* elaborates a thing and functions as a profile determinant, whereas *foot* qualifies a thing and functions as a dependent modifier, hence it is extrinsic to the meaning of *ball*. The composite structure profiles a thing, a kind of ball designed to be kicked with the foot.

Exercise 2.4

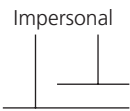
Identify the profile determinant in each of the following morphological expressions.

1. cloudy
2. rudeness
3. boredom
4. resistible
5. connection

### 2.1.4 Constituency

A composite structure consists of two or more substructures. The order in which the substructures are successively integrated to yield a composite structure is referred to as **Constituency**. In the combination process, the substructures can be arranged at different levels of constituency, such that substructures at one level combine to form a composite structure that functions as a unitary entity at the next higher level, and so on. Constituency tends to be variable. An expression which has the same composite structure and the same grammatical relations can have alternate orders of composition. The information essential to the characterization of a composite structure does not reside in constituency but in the semantic relationship which it holds between its substructures. Let us take an example to illustrate this determinant. In *gentlemanly*, at the first or lower level of constituency, the substructure *gentle* is integrated with the substructure *man* to form the composite structure *gentleman*. At the second or higher level, *gentleman* combines with *-ly* deriving the overall expression.

Some composite structures allow only one manner of composition. As an illustration of this, let us examine the formation of the word *impersonal*. At the first level, the nominal root *person* and the adjectival suffix *-al* are combined to produce the adjective *personal*. At the second level, *personal* is combined with the negative prefix *im-* to produce the adjective *impersonal*. If we combine *person* and *im-* first, we get *imperson* which is incorrect as there is no such word in English. The analysis can be diagrammed as follows:



Other composite structures, by contrast, allow alternate manners of composition. As an illustration of this, let us examine the formation of the word *unlockable*. The first layer of structure is as follows. At the first level, the root *lock* and the adjectival suffix *-able* are combined to produce *lockable*.

At the second level, *lockable* is combined with the negative prefix *un-* to produce the adjective *unlockable*. The second layer of structure is as follows. At the first level, the negative prefix *un-* is combined with the root *lock* to produce the verb *unlock*. At the second level, *unlock* is combined with the adjectival suffix *-able* to produce the adjective *unlockable*. The analysis can be diagrammed as follows:



Exercise 2.5

Diagram the following expressions to show their layers of structure. Note that two of them allow alternate orders of composition.

1. unlawful

-----

-----
2. disgraceful

-----

-----
3. enlargement

-----

-----
4. coauthorship

-----

-----
5. insupportable

-----

-----

2.2 Interpretation

Interpretation is the assignment of meaning to a morphological expression. It resides in the two principles of **compositionality** and **analysability**. The former refers to the degree to which the meaning of a complex expression is thought of as being assembled from the meanings of its component parts. The latter refers to the extent to which the component parts of a complex expression match up phonologically and semantically. In the sphere of morphology, I argue that these principles can apply to the topic of word formation in a similar way. In Cognitive Morphology, the semantics of a composite structure involves the meanings of its substructures, and in some cases of the background information provided by its contextual use, the speaker’s conceptualization or the world knowledge. Likewise, the analysis of a composite structure is carried out on the basis of both the phonological and semantic contributions made by its substructures. In the following text is a description of the principles responsible for the interpretation of a composite structure.

## 2.2.1 Compositionality

Compositionality refers to the process of deriving the meaning of a composite structure from the meanings of its substructures. Compositionality is a matter of regularity, that is, how regular the compositional process is or how predictable the composite result is. Compositionality is an essential feature of vocabulary building. It helps speakers to construct and understand novel expressions. Precisely, it helps speakers to see if the meaning of a composite structure can be obtained by adding together the meanings of its individual parts. Morphological expressions exhibit two types of compositionality. One is full, where the meaning of a composite structure is a function of the meanings of its substructures. The other is partial, where the meaning of a composite structure is symbolized by not only the meanings of its substructures but also the contextual knowledge surrounding its use.

### 2.2.1.1 Full compositionality

Under full compositionality, the meaning of a composite structure is fully determined by the meanings of its substructures and the manner in which they are combined. Full compositionality works for a large number of linguistic units in language. In derivation, for example, the meaning of *mendable* in a *mendable fault* is a combination of the root and the suffix: a fault that can be mended. In compounding, full compositionality represents a case of **endocentricity**, where the meaning of a compound is a specialization of the meaning of its head. Endocentric compounds are those whose meaning can be figured out by analysing their parts. In such compounds, the second substructure functions as the head, whereas the first substructure functions as its modifier, attributing a property to the head. In *hair pin*, for example, *pin* is the head, whereas *hair* is the modifier. The meaning of the compound is a combination of the meanings of the modifier and the head: a pin used to keep the hair back off the face. It is a compound that denotes a hyponym of the head. A *hair pin* is a type of pin. However, the semantic value of an expression cannot just be limited to conventional means but enriched by encyclopaedic knowledge.

### Exercise 2.6

Indicate the part of speech, or word class, of the component parts of the following morphological expressions. Then, write the meaning of each resulting composition.

- |                |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| 1. pine tree   | ----- | ----- |
| 2. breastfeed  | ----- | ----- |
| 3. grindstone  | ----- | ----- |
| 4. week-long   | ----- | ----- |
| 5. last-minute | ----- | ----- |

2.2.1.2 Partial compositionality

Under partial compositionality, the meaning of a composite structure is determined by both the semantic contribution of its substructures and the pragmatic knowledge behind what is actually symbolized. In derivation, for example, the meaning of *questionable* in *questionable theory* is not only a function of the meanings of the root and the suffix, a theory that can be questioned, but rather a theory that is dubious. Presumably, every theory can be questioned. In compounding, partial compositionality represents a case of **exocentricity**, where the meaning of a compound is not a specialization of the meaning of its head as it lacks a head. Since the head is not explicitly expressed, the meaning of the compound is accounted for by means of encyclopaedic knowledge. For example, the compound *walkman* does not denote a hyponym of the head. Its meaning is not only a function of the meanings of the modifier and head: a man who walks, but rather a type of personal stereo: a small cassette player, with small headphones.

Exercise 2.7

Name the part of speech, or word class, of the component parts of the following morphological expressions. Then, account for the meaning of each resulting composition.

- |              |       |       |
|--------------|-------|-------|
| 1. killjoy   | ----- | ----- |
| 2. bluebell  | ----- | ----- |
| 3. birdbrain | ----- | ----- |
| 4. paperback | ----- | ----- |
| 5. loudmouth | ----- | ----- |

Full compositionality fails when the meanings of composite structures cannot be worked out on the basis of the meanings of their parts. Their interpretation goes beyond the information that is linguistically encoded. This is so because of two reasons. First, lexical items do not have fixed meanings. Their meanings tend to vary according to different contexts. Second, lexical items need,

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when they integrate, to adjust to each other in certain details. This requires shifting in their values relative to the intended conceptualization. This process is referred to as **accommodation**, the phenomenon in which a component substructure adjusts itself when integrated with another to form a composite structure. For example, the meaning of the word *child* can have positive and negative qualities. The nature of the quality is highlighted by the type of derivational morpheme used. In *childish*, the root *child* accommodates itself to the meaning of the suffix *-ish* to denote immaturity. Prototypically the word *house* means a place for people to live in. In a *warehouse*, however, the meaning of *house* accommodates itself to the meaning of *ware* to refer to a place where things are stored.

## Exercise 2.8

In the following expressions, the head *box* accommodates itself to the meaning of the modifier. Write the resulting meaning.

- 1. jury box -----
- 2. deed box -----
- 3. press box -----
- 4. phone box -----
- 5. music box -----

## 2.2.2 Analysability

Analysability refers to the process of matching up the substructures of a composite structure phonologically and semantically. Precisely, it refers to the ability of the speaker to recognize the phonological and semantic contributions made by the component substructures to the composite structure s/he is choosing. Analysability is a matter of awareness, that is, of the presence and contribution of the substructures of a composite structure. Analysability is an essential feature of language and nature of linguistic meaning. It helps speakers to see if each substructure, which has an identifiable semantic and phonetic content, can contribute to the meaning of the composite structure. Morphological expressions exhibit two types of analysability. One is full, where there is an accord between analysability at the phonological and semantic levels. The other is partial, where there is a clash between the two levels.

2.2.2.1 *Full analysability*

Full analysability is the case when the phonological substructures of a composite structure match up, one to one, with their semantic substructures. In such expressions, the speaker is aware of how the substructures contribute to the semantic make-up of the composite structure, and so enrich its interpretation. A word like *thinker*, for example, is considered fully analysable at both phonological and semantic levels. At the phonological level, it is analysable. The speaker is aware of its two substructures *think* and *-er*. At the semantic level, it is analysable. The speaker is aware of the semantic contributions of its substructures. A *thinker* is a person who thinks. Likewise, a compound structure like *football* is considered fully analysable. At the phonological level, the speaker can divide it into its component substructures *foot* and *ball*. At the semantic level, the speaker can identify the contribution made by each substructure. That is, the semantics of the compound derives from its substructures. A *football* is a large ball made of leather or plastic and filled with air, used in games of football.

**Exercise 2.9**

In the following morphological expressions, the phonological and semantic component parts correspond. Single out their semantic contributions and then write the resulting meaning.

- |                 |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| 1. mini-skirt   | ----- | ----- |
| 2. ante-room    | ----- | ----- |
| 3. intra-union  | ----- | ----- |
| 4. vice-consul  | ----- | ----- |
| 5. ultra-modern | ----- | ----- |

2.2.2.2 *Partial analysability*

Partial analysability is the case when the phonological substructures of a composite structure fail to correspond with their semantic substructures. In such expressions, the composite structure is only phonologically, not semantically, analysable. A word like *thriller*, for example, is considered partially analysable. Phonologically, it is analysable, but semantically it is not. It does not mean a person who pleases others, but a book or film that tells an exciting story about murder or crime. Likewise, a compound structure like *bigmouth* is considered partially analysable. At the phonological level, it is



quite analysable. The speaker is aware of the fact that it consists of the two phonological substructures *big* and *mouth*. At the semantic level, however, it is not analysable. The speaker is not aware of the contributions made by the substructures. It is not easy to recognize the meanings of the parts in the resulting structure. The speaker has to go beyond the information that is linguistically encoded by its substructures. The meaning becomes clear when the speaker takes into determinant clues from context and encyclopaedic knowledge. *Bigmouth* refers to a person who is regarded as noisy, vulgar or boastful.

Exercise 2.10

In the following morphological expressions, the phonological and semantic component parts fail to correspond. Disclose the semantic contributions and then solicit encyclopaedic knowledge to write the resulting meaning.

- |               |       |       |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| 1. egghead    | ----- | ----- |
| 2. hardback   | ----- | ----- |
| 3. spoonbill  | ----- | ----- |
| 4. greenhorn  | ----- | ----- |
| 5. pickpocket | ----- | ----- |

Summary

In this chapter, I considered the cognitive mechanisms which govern the construction and interpretation of composite words. The aim was to introduce the tools of the cognitive framework and show how they account for intricacies of morphological expressions. Two sorts of mechanism were presented. One sort is **integration**, the combination of morphological substructures into a linear sequence. Four determinants were shown to affect morphological integration. (i) **Correspondence**, the compatibility between two substructures in forming a composite structure. (ii) **Dependence**, the reliance of one substructure on the other in completing its meaning. (iii) **Determinacy**, the tendency of one substructure to lend its character to the entire composite structure. (iv) **Constituency**, the order in which the substructures are successively integrated to yield a composite structure. The other sort is **interpretation**, the assignment of meaning to a morphological expression. Two principles were shown to affect morphological interpretation. One is **compositionality**,

where the meaning of a composite structure is either derived from the meanings of its substructures and/or includes knowledge outside its limits. The other is **analysability**, the extent to which the substructures of a composite structure match up phonologically and semantically.

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the cognitive mechanisms and their application to morphological expressions.

Table 2.1 Cognitive mechanisms

Cognitive mechanisms	
Integration	Interpretation
1. correspondence: In forming a composite structure, the substructures should display similarity at both semantic and phonological levels.	1. compositionality (a) full compositionality: the meaning of a composite structure is fully determined by the meanings of its substructures.
2. dependence: In forming a composite structure, one substructure qualifies as autonomous and another as dependent and so in need of the former to complete its meaning.	(b) partial compositionality: the meaning of a composite structure is determined by both the semantic contribution of its substructures and the pragmatic knowledge behind its use.
3. determinacy: In forming a composite structure, one substructure lends its profile to the entire composite structure and so determines its meaning.	2. analysability (a) full analysability: the phonological substructure of a composite structure matches up with its semantic substructure.
4. constituency: In forming a composite structure, the substructures are arranged at different levels of constituency, producing each time a meaningful unit.	(b) partial analysability: the phonological substructure of a composite structure fails to correspond with its semantic substructure.

# Cognitive Operations

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Chapter 3 touches upon the cognitive operations which language users perform in the course of producing and interpreting morphological expressions. The aim is to show how morphological structures can best be explained with reference to human mental abilities. The chapter contains three sections. Section 3.1 has to do with the mental ability to categorise the multiple senses of a morphological item and arranged around a prototype. Section 3.2 has to do with the mental ability to group morphological items into domains, in which each item occupies a specific facet. Section 3.3 has to do with the mental ability to construe a given situation in alternate ways and to express them in language by using different morphological items. In all the sections, I pursue three steps. First, I introduce the mental operation. Second, I underlie its impact on morphology. Third, I test its applicability through exercises.

## 3.1 Categorization

Categorization refers to the mental act of grouping together the numerous senses of a lexical item into a category. A **category** is a network of distinct but related senses of a given lexical item. One sense, termed the **prototype**, serves as an ideal example from which other senses, termed the **periphery**, are derived. The prototype is the member that has the core properties of the category. It is the sense that comes to mind first and is the most salient instance of the category. The periphery comprises the remaining senses, which are linked to the prototype via semantic extensions. They are organized in terms of conceptual distance from the prototype, based on the degree of similarity. For instance, *kitchen chair* is regarded as the prototype of the *chair* category because it possesses almost all of its features, whereas *rocking chair*, *swivel chair*, *armchair*, *wheelchair* or *highchair* are regarded as the periphery because they possess only some of those features. From the different instances is constructed the schema [-CHAIR]. A **schema** is a pattern which is specified in general terms and elaborated by its instances in detailed ways. The schema is used as a template in the use of novel expressions.

To make this clear, let us consider an example from the subject of morphology. Words ending in the suffix *-ure* form a category of interrelated senses which is defined by the schema [-URE]. Prototypically, the suffix *-ure* is tacked

on to verbs to form nouns. Its meaning is founded on the semantic property of transitivity, the number of objects a verb takes to complete its meaning in a given instance. Relative to the nature of the root, the suffix acquires the following senses:

- (a) 'the action of performing the thing described in the root'. This sense emerges when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *closure* is the act of closing something, *erasure* is the act of removing something, and *seizure* is the act of taking control of something. In peripheral formations, the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *departure* is the act of departing or leaving a place, *mixture* is the act of mixing or mixing different substances together, and *pressure* is the act of pressing or forcing somebody to do something.
- (b) 'the result of the action described in the root'. This sense appears when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *enclosure* is the result of being surrounded, *discomfiture* is the result of being uneasy, and *exposure* is the result of being uncovered. In extended formations, the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *composure* is the state of being calm and in control of your feelings or behaviour, *failure* is the result of failing, not being successful, and *pleasure* is the state of being pleased, feeling happy or satisfied.
- (c) 'the body which performs the thing described in the root'. This sense follows when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, *judicature* is a body of persons having the power to make decisions, and *legislature* is a body of persons having the power to make laws.

Peripherally, the suffix *-ure* is attached to nouns to form nouns. Its meaning is founded on the semantic distinction concrete vs. abstract. A concrete noun is a word which has a physical entity. An abstract noun is a word which does not have a physical referent. Based on the nature of the root, the suffix acquires the following senses:

- (a) 'the position, rank or office of the thing described in the root'. This sense proceeds when the nominal roots are concrete and the nouns describe things connected with people. For example, *prefecture* is the office, position or territory of a prefect, and *prelature* is the office, position or territory of a prelate.
- (b) 'the state of being the thing described in the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are concrete and the nouns describe conditions in which people are. For example, *candidature* is the state of being a candidate.

The multiple senses of the suffix *-ure* are represented in Figure 3.1. Note that the solid arrow represents the prototypical sense, whereas the broken arrows represent the semantic extensions.

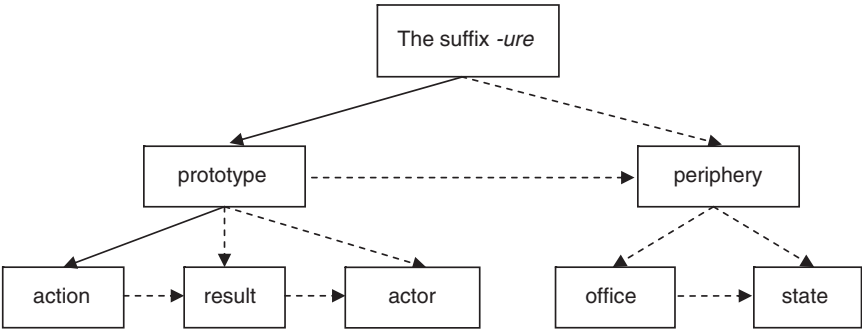


Figure 3.1 The semantic network of the suffix -ure

For morphology, the prototype theory of meaning has three significant consequences.

- Morphological expressions form complex categories. The senses of a morpheme stand for experiences which humans encounter in life. The senses are linked to one another by extension from a **prototype**, the sense that comes to mind first and is the most frequent in the category. From the prototype is derived the periphery, the senses that contain some, not all, of the properties of the morpheme. An example illustrating the notion of category is the derivational morpheme *bi-*. The category it forms contains two senses. Prototypically, it means ‘two’ when the root denotes a countable object as in *bicycle*. Peripherally, it means ‘twice’ when the root denotes a temporal aspect as in *bi-annual*.

Exercise 3.1

Mark the prototypical example with PRO and the peripheral example with PER of the following derivational morphemes.

1. -age	coverage	-----	mileage	-----
2. -ant	coolant	-----	hesitant	-----
3. -en	thicken	-----	silken	-----
4. non-	non-entity	-----	non-verbal	-----
5. sub-	subsoil	-----	sub-chief	-----

- Morphological expressions have multiple senses related by **semantic properties**, essential attributes of meaning used as a basis for description or

classification. Semantic properties defining nouns are concrete/abstract, human/non-human and common/proper. Semantic properties defining adjectives are qualitative/quantitative or gradable/non-gradable. Semantic properties defining verbs are transitive/intransitive. An example demonstrating the notion of semantic property is the derivational morpheme *arch-* which has two senses. Prototypically, it is attached to concrete roots to mean ‘chief’ as in *archbishop*. Peripherally, it is attached to abstract roots to mean ‘extreme’ as in *archconservative*.

Exercise 3.2

Name the semantic property on the basis of which the senses of the following derivational morphemes are categorized.

1. -al	cynical	-----	colossal	-----
2. -ce	absence	-----	abundance	-----
3. -ism	Platonism	-----	nationism	-----
4. -able	washable	-----	perishable	-----
5. -ship	professorship	-----	warship	-----

• Morphological expressions set up different schemas. The senses of a morpheme can be characterized by means of a **schema**, a rough representation built on actual instances, which the senses flesh out by adding specific details. The schema allows for a range of variation in the senses rather than pinning them down to exact values. It is used for analysing already existing expressions and coining new ones. An example illuminating the notion of schema is the set of instances like *socio-industrial*, *socio-linguistic*, *socio-political*, and so on. On the basis of such instances, one can construct the schema [SOCIO-], which describes an entity as being related to society.

Exercise 3.3

Construct schemas based on the examples hosting the attached morphemes. Then, give their meanings.

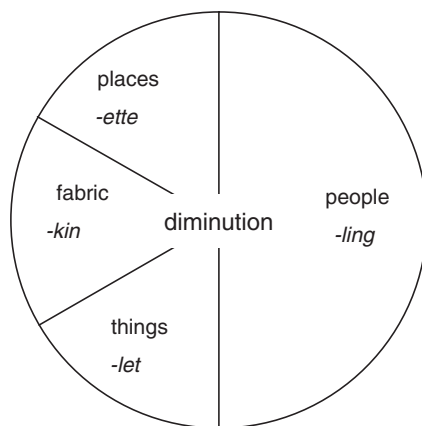
1. Chinese	Japanese	Portugese	[-----]	-----
2. ex-coach	ex-wife	ex-employer	[-----]	-----
3. retrochoir	retro-ocular	retrotarsal	[-----]	-----
4. moneywise	profitwise	weatherwise	[-----]	-----
5. audio-cassette	audio-tape	audio-typist	[-----]	-----

## 3.2 Configuration

Configuration refers to the mental act of grouping together a number of lexical items into a cognitive domain. A **domain** is a knowledge background with respect to which the meanings of lexical items can be properly described. The knowledge is based on experience derived from beliefs, customs and practices. The structure of a domain usually has a number of facets. A **facet** is a portion of a domain which is associated with a particular concept. Each facet is expressed by an appropriate form of language. A domain comprises a set of linguistic items linked in such a way that to understand the meaning of any one item it is necessary first to identify the conceptual knowledge that it evokes and second to relate it to the specific facet within it. The meanings of lexical items cannot be understood independently of the domains with which they are associated. For example, the meanings of the morphological expressions *father*, *aunt*, *cousin*, *nephew*, and so on, can best be understood against the domain of *kinship*, which the speaker activates as the background knowledge for the description. Within kinship, each expression highlights a certain facet.

To make this clear, let us take an example from the subject of morphology. The suffixes *-ette*, *-kin*, *-let* and *-ling* evoke, I argue, the domain of **diminution**, an area of knowledge in which somebody or something is made small in size, young in age, or less in value. Diminutives combine with nominal roots to form new nouns which imply a reduction in the size, extent or importance of something. The suffix *-ling* is used mostly to form animate derivatives. It is used chiefly to describe persons, animals or plants. For example, *princeling* is a prince who rules a small or unimportant country, *duckling* is a young duck, and *seedling* is a young plant that has grown from a seed. By contrast, the suffixes *-ette*, *-kin* and *-let* are used mostly to form inanimate derivatives. The suffixes, however, differ in that each has a particular nuance. The suffix *-ette* is used chiefly to describe places or works of literature. For example, *kitchenette* is a small kitchen, and *novelette* is a short novel. The suffix *-kin* is used chiefly to describe fabric. For example, *napkin* is a small piece of cloth or paper used at a meal for wiping fingers or lips and protecting garments. The suffix *-let* is used chiefly to describe things. For example, *droplet* is a small drop of liquid, and *booklet* is a small, thin book with paper covers.

The different facets of the domain of **diminution** are represented in Figure 3.2.



**Figure 3.2** The domain of diminution

For morphology, the domain theory of meaning has three significant consequences:

- Morphological expressions come not singly but in a **domain**, a conceptual area which is represented by a set of morphemes. The morphemes thus display affinity in meaning. The affinity resides in sharing structured backgrounds of experiences, beliefs or practices. To understand the semantics of any morpheme it is necessary to locate the domain to which it belongs and identify its counterparts. We can clarify this by an example. To understand the meaning of the derivational morpheme *retro-* in such words as *retroact*, *retrofire*, *retrograde*, one has to know the domain which it evokes, that of order in time.

### Exercise 3.4

Name the domains which the attached derivational morphemes evoke for their characterization.

1. geophysics -----
2. step-parent -----
3. frost-proof -----
4. oxygen-poor -----
5. computer-speak -----

- Morphological expressions occupy different **facets** within a domain, distinct aspects represented by different morphemes. The morphemes thus display



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contrast in meaning. The contrast resides in the particular facets which determine their distribution. To understand the semantics of any morpheme, it is necessary to understand the structure of the domain and the exact facet allocated to it. We can simplify this by an example. The derivational morpheme *-folk* belongs to the domain of people. To understand its meaning, one has to know the particular facet in which it is deployed, referring to people in a particular area as in *townsfolk*, or in a society as in *menfolk*.

Exercise 3.5

The attached derivational morphemes denote similarity. Write which facet of similarity each highlights.

- 1. childlike -----
- 2. humanoid -----
- 3. paramilitary -----
- 4. mock-serious -----
- 5. neo-classicism -----

• Morphological expressions participate, due to polysemy, in a **matrix**, the set of domains which provide the context for the full understanding of a morpheme. In each domain, the morpheme occupies a distinct context, indicates a different meaning, and makes a different contribution to language. To understand the semantics of any morpheme, it is necessary to grasp the domains in which it partakes and the relations it has with its counterparts. We can demystify this by an example. The derivational morpheme *-ly* participates in at least two domains. One is the domain of manner as in *a princely welcome*. The other is the domain of recurrence as in *a daily flight*.

Exercise 3.6

Label the multiple domains which the derivational morpheme *-y* evokes in each of the following examples.

- 1. scary -----
- 2. chilly -----
- 3. bushy -----
- 4. doggy -----
- 5. woody -----

### 3.3 Conceptualization

Conceptualization refers to the mental act of construing a conceived situation in alternate ways. **Construal** refers to the ability of the speaker to conceptualize a situation in different ways and use different linguistic expressions to represent them in discourse. The meaning of a linguistic expression does not reside in its conceptual content alone, but includes the particular way of construing that content. One dimension of construal is **perspective**, the viewpoint the speaker takes of a situation which differs relative to communicative needs. Two lexical items may share the same content, but differ in terms of the perspective which the speaker imposes on their common content. Each alternative is realized in language differently. Even though verbs such as *emigrate* and *immigrate* can be represented by identical sets of semantic features, their meanings are different. Both involve the leaving of a place; but with a difference in usage. *To emigrate* is to leave a native country and settle in another, as in *Thousands emigrated from my country to Europe*. *To immigrate* is to come and settle in a new country, as in *Thousands immigrated to my country from Europe*.

To make this clear, let us cite an example from the subject of morphology. The suffixes *-ion* and *-ce* are attached to verbal roots to form nouns. They evoke the domain of **process**, which involves taking an action to achieve a result. Yet, each profiles a specific aspect of it. The suffix *-ion* means ‘the overall act named by the root’, whereas the suffix *-ce* means ‘the specific result labelled in the root’. For example, the two nouns *acceptation* and *acceptance* are derived from the verbal root *accept*, which means ‘to take something that someone offers, or to agree to do something that someone asks’. Despite the similarity in derivation, the two nouns differ in terms of the perspective imposed on their common root. In *The expression has won people’s acceptation*, the noun *acceptation* refers to the overall act of accepting. *Acceptation* is an approval of something. In *He had acceptance from three universities*, the noun *acceptance* refers to the specific result of accepting. *Acceptance* here is a formal agreement allowing a student to study at a university.

The two ways of construing the conceptual content *accept* are represented in Figure 3.3.

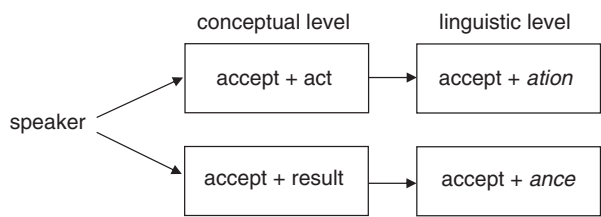


Figure 3.3 The construal of the conceptual content *accept*

For morphology, the construal theory of meaning has three significant consequences:

- Morphological expressions represent different **construals**, the act of perceiving and describing a situation. Each construal reflects a different mental experience. The choice of a morphological expression correlates with the particular construal imposed on a situation. This becomes evident in an example. Both *tasteful* and *tasty* are derived from the noun *taste*, but they are different in construal. In construing objects, the speaker uses the word *tasteful* as in *tasteful décor* with the suffix *-ful* meaning ‘displaying the quality denoted by the nominal root’. By contrast, in construing food the speaker uses *tasty* as in *tasty soup*, with the suffix *-y* meaning ‘full of the thing specified by the nominal root in quality’.

Exercise 3.7

Complete each of the following sentences with the right morphological expression which fits the construal implied.

- |  |        |        |
|--|--------|--------|
| 1. He respects people very deeply.     | He is  | _____. |
| People respect him very deeply.        | He is  | _____. |
| 2. She imagines the assignment.        | She is | _____. |
| The assignment can be imagined.        | It is  | _____. |
| 3. The literature deals with classics. | It is  | _____. |
| The literature is of a lasting value.  | It is  | _____. |
| 4. The advert is dully repeated.       | It is  | _____. |
| The advert is often repeated.          | It is  | _____. |
| 5. My remark derided her works.        | It is  | _____. |
| Her remark derided my works.           | It is  | _____. |

- Morphological expressions represent different dimensions of construal. Each dimension serves as a means to include or exclude certain portions of a

scene. One important dimension of construal relates to the **perspective**, the view the speaker imposes on a scene or situation. This becomes obvious in an example. In *It is detective work*, the speaker chooses the agent performing the act of detection (The work detects). So, the speaker uses the adjective ending in the suffix *-ive*. By contrast, in *It is a detectable change* the speaker chooses the receiver undergoing the act of detection (They detect a change). So, the speaker uses the adjective ending in the suffix *-able*.

### Exercise 3.8

Explain the meanings of the italicized words in the following sentences, each of which reflects a different perspective.

1. The drug is *preventive*. \_\_\_\_\_  
The disease is *preventable*. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The melody is said to be *haunting*. \_\_\_\_\_  
The house is said to be *haunted*. \_\_\_\_\_
3. After days of *manful* defence, they surrendered. \_\_\_\_\_  
It is *manly* to confess one's own mistakes. \_\_\_\_\_
4. His *toleration* of the drug is phenomenal. \_\_\_\_\_  
He preaches *tolerance*, compassion and patience. \_\_\_\_\_
5. They were engaged in *non-rational* argument. \_\_\_\_\_  
His parents criticized his *irrational* behaviour. \_\_\_\_\_

• Morphological expressions are **non-synonymous**, neither identical in meaning nor interchangeable in use. They constitute different conceptualizations of the same situation, which is realized morphologically differently. In each case, it is the bound morpheme that encodes the intended conceptualization and singles out the different aspect of the meaning of the expression. This becomes apparent in an example. The adjectives *woollen* and *woolly* are derived from the noun *wool*, but they are distinguishable in use. The bound morpheme *-en* describes the substance out of which something is made. By contrast, the bound morpheme *-y* describes the feature of the thing conceptualized.

### Exercise 3.9

What difference in meaning do the bound morphemes cause between the following pairs of morphological expressions?

1. displace \_\_\_\_\_  
misplace \_\_\_\_\_

2. falseness	-----
falsity	-----
3. observance	-----
observation	-----
4. participative	-----
participatory	-----
5. venturesome	-----
venturesome	-----

## Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the three cognitive operations carried out by the language user in the production of morphological expressions. The aim was to show that morphological structures can best be explained with reference to human mental abilities. Three mental abilities were identified. The first is **categorization**, the mental act of grouping together the numerous senses of a morphological item into a category. A **category** is a network of the senses of a morphological item which is structured in terms of prototype and periphery. A morphological item, due to polysemy, displays a network of interrelated senses. The second is **configuration**, the mental act of grouping together a number of morphological items into a cognitive domain, in which each occupies a specific facet. A **domain** is a coherent area of conceptualization which provides the basis for the characterization of a morphological item. The third is **conceptualization**, the mental act of conceiving and expressing a situation in alternate ways. **Construal** is the mental ability of a speaker to construe a situation in alternate ways and to express them in language by using different morphological items. Two morphological expressions may have the same conceptual content, but still contrast semantically. The semantic contrast between them is attributable to the imposition of alternate construals on their content. Each morphological expression designates a different construal.

Table 3.1 presents a summary of the cognitive operation used in the production of morphological expressions.

Table 3.1 Cognitive operations

Cognitive operations	
Operation	Definition
Categorization	The process of gathering the multiple senses of a morphological item around a prototypical one, from which the peripheral ones are derived.
Configuration	The process of grouping different morphological items into a domain, in which each represents a different facet and so has a specific role to play in language.
Conceptualization	The process of construing a situation in alternate ways and choosing the right morphological items to realise them, each of which represents a different perspective.



# Part II

## Prefixation

---

Part II is about the morphology of prefixes in English. A **prefix** is a bound morpheme that is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to form a new composite word of either a similar or different word class. The free morpheme is a root or base which can be a noun, an adjective or a verb. As an active mode within word formation, **prefixation** is the process of deriving a new word by attaching a prefix to the front of a root or base. Some prefixes are productive, others less so. Some prefixes are native. Others come from Latin, often through French or Greek. Regardless of productivity or etymology, Part II gives comprehensive coverage of the prefixes. It includes three chapters. Chapter 4 relates to identifying the multiple senses of the prefixes. Chapter 5 deals with grouping the prefixes into sets. Chapter 6 pertains to establishing the contributory roles of the prefixes in interpreting word pairs.

In the course of integration, the composite structure made up of a prefix and a root is governed by four valence factors. First, the prefix corresponds with the root at both semantic and phonological levels. Phonologically, the prefix *en-* attaches to the root *body* to yield *embody*. Semantically, the prefix *en-* denotes causation which corresponds to the meaning denoted by *body*. Second, the prefix qualifies as dependent, while the root qualifies as autonomous. To complete its meaning, the prefix *en-*, which qualifies as dependent, needs a root like *body*, which qualifies as autonomous, to form *embody*. Third, the prefix acts as the profile determinant, whereas the root acts as the complement. The prefix has twofold import in the derivation process. First, it mostly changes the word class of the derived formation. *Body* is a noun but *embody* is a verb. Second, it adds a special meaning to the derived formation. *Embody* means ‘make something tangible’. Fourth, the composite structure displays meaningful levels of constituency. In *embodiment*, at the first level the prefix *en-* integrates with the root *body* to form *embody*. At the second level, *embody* combines with the suffix *-ment* to form *embodiment*.

In the course of interpretation, the composite structure made up of a prefix and a root receives a two-way semantic analysis. In some cases, the meaning



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resides in the component substructures out of which the composite structure is assembled. Both the prefix and the root add substance to the composite structure, but the prefix plays a decisive role in the interpretation process. For example, the meaning of the word *incorrect* is quite clear. It is a combination of the meanings of the prefix and the root: 'not correct'. In other cases, the meaning includes properties that go beyond the limits of the composite structure. The prefix adds important substance to the root, but the composite structure requires encyclopaedic knowledge in its interpretation. For example, the meaning of the word *inhuman* is not only a function of the meanings of the root and the prefix, 'not human', but rather 'somebody who is cruel, lacking the qualities of kindness and pity'.

# Prefixal Categories

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Chapter 4 considers the role of categorization in the semantic description of English prefixes as individual items. Applying the cognitive assumption that linguistic items are polysemous and so form complex categories, it is argued that a prefix forms a category made up of a range of senses. The category is defined by a **schema**, a pattern which focuses on the generality of a prefix. The senses, which are called elaborations or instantiations, flesh out the schema in varying, often contrastive, ways. One sense which is central is termed the **prototype**. The other senses which arise as a result of the interaction between the semantics of the prefix and the base are termed the **periphery**. The senses are arranged in terms of conceptual distance from the prototype. The purpose of the chapter is to provide exact definitions for the multiple senses of a prefix. The chapter includes two sections. Section 4.1 examines positive prefixes. Section 4.2 studies negative prefixes. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I single out the central sense of a prefix. Second, I pinpoint its marginal senses. Third, I offer examples to illustrate its senses.

## 4.1 Positive prefixes

A positive prefix is a bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to form a new word. The prefix affirms the truth of the new formation and adds a specific tinge of meaning to it. For example, *sur-* is a bound morpheme that is dependent on the free morpheme *charge* to form the word *surcharge*, which means ‘extra money paid for something’. Positive prefixes in English include *ante-*, *be-*, *en(m)-*, *fore-*, *hyper-*, *inter-*, *intra-*, *macro-*, *maxi-*, *mega-*, *micro-*, *mid-*, *midi-*, *mini-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *super-* and *ultra-*.

### 4.1.1 Noun-forming prefixes

A noun-forming prefix, also called a **nominal prefix** or a **nominalizer**, is a bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to derive a new noun. The free morpheme can be a verb, an adjective or a noun. The process of deriving a new noun from different word classes is referred to as **nominalization**. Noun-forming prefixes in English include *ante-*, *fore-*,

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*macro-*, *maxi-*, *mega-*, *micro-*, *mid-*, *midi-*, *mini-*, *post-* and *pre-*. Below is the semantic network of each prefix.

### ◎ [ANTE-]

A prototypical representation of the prefix *ante-* denotes order in time. It carries the sense 'prior to the time referred to by the root'. This sense comes to attention when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *antedate* means happening before something else. Examples of other formations are (N) *ante-dawn*, *antemundane*, (adj) *antenatal*, and so on.

A peripheral representation of the prefix *ante-* denotes order in space. It carries the sense 'in front of the place referred to by the root'. This sense comes to attention when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *anteroom* is a small room situated before a larger room. Examples of other formations are *antechamber*, *antechapel*, *ante-church*, and so on.

### ◎ [FORE-]

The frequent occurrence of the prefix *fore-* designates order in time. It conveys two senses. (a) 'preceding or leading the agent mentioned in the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal bases are common personal nouns. For example, a *forefather* is a person (especially a man) whom one is descended from, especially one who lived a long time ago. Similar nouns are *foreman*, *forerunner*, *forewoman*, and so on. (b) 'occurring before the action mentioned in the root'. This sense surfaces when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *to foresee* is to know about something before it happens. Similar verbs are *forejudge*, *forestall*, *foretaste*, *foretell*, *forewarn*, and so on. The same is true of nouns implying action. For example, *foresight* is the act of seeing into the future. Similar nouns are *foreknowledge*, *forethought*, and so on.

The less frequent occurrence of the prefix *fore-* designates order in place. It conveys two senses. (a) 'situated in front of the place mentioned in the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *foreshore* is the part of a shore between the water and cultivated or developed land. Similar nouns are *fore-chamber*, *forefence*, *foregallery*, *fore-hall*, and so on. Some nouns refer to human body parts such as *forearm*, *forebrain*, *forefoot*, *forehead*, *foreleg*, and so on. Other nouns refer to parts of a ship near the bows such as *foredeck*, *foremast*, *foresail*, *forestay*, and so on. (b) 'being the most

important of the position mentioned in the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *forefront* is the position of most importance or prominence, and *foreground* is the most important or prominent position.

### Exercise 4.1

The following composite words begin with the prefix *fore-*. Arrange them in the order in which they come to mind, writing first the prototypical word and then the peripheral ones

fore-hall, forefront, forewarn, forerunner, forehead

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

### ◎ [MACRO-]

The basic sense of the prefix *macro-*, which is the antonym of the prefix *micro-*, describes size. It has three semantic specializations. (a) 'very large of the object denoted by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal bases are concrete. For example, a *macrograph* is a large representation of a graph, a *macronucleus* is a large nucleus of the two nuclei present in ciliate protozoans and a *macrospore* is a large spore of certain flowerless plants. (b) 'instrument for making large the thing denoted by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *macrotome* is an instrument for making large sections of anatomical specimens, and a *macrometer* is an instrument for measuring the distance of an object from the observer. (c) 'do the thing denoted by the root on a large scale'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *macroeconomics* is the study of economics on a national scale, *macroevolution* is evolution that occurs on a large scale, and *macrosociology* is the study of sociology at the national scale.

The secondary sense of the prefix *macro-* describes process. It means 'making larger the thing denoted by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal bases are abstract, implying process. For example, *macrophotography* is the process of making of photographs in which the image on the film is as large as or larger than the object.

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### ◎ [MAXI-]

The elaboration of size is regarded as the prototype of the prefix *maxi-*. It can be glossed as ‘large or long of the object named in the root’. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *maxi-skirt* is a skirt that is ankle-length. Further examples are *maxi-CD*, *maxi-coat*, *maxi-dress*, *maxi-taxi*, *maxi-yacht*, and so on.

The elaboration of degree is regarded as the periphery of the prefix *maxi-*. This sense can be glossed as ‘the thing named in the root is of great scope or intensity’. This sense emerges when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *maxi-devaluation* means reducing the value of a currency to a large degree.

### ◎ [MEGA-]

The prototype of the prefix *mega-* expresses measurement. It means ‘one million times the unit given in the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, a *megabyte* is, in computer technology, one million bytes. Other nouns are *megahertz*, *megaton*, *megavolt*, *megawatt*, and so on.

The periphery of the prefix *mega-* contains two extensions. **(a)** ‘greater than the example given in the root’. In this use, it expresses degree, describing an entity as being impressive. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, a *mega-show* is a huge event in which exhibitors, entertainers or presenters take part. Other nouns are *mega-business*, *mega-crash*, *mega-event*, *mega-tour*, *mega-trip*, and so on. **(b)** ‘bigger than the thing given in the root’. In this use, it expresses size, describing an object as being considerably large. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *megaphone* is a device for amplifying and directing the voice. Other nouns are *mega-church*, *mega-dose*, *mega-drum*, *mega-market*, *mega-temple*, and so on.

### Exercise 4.2

Insert the prefixes *macro-*, *maxi-* or *mega-*, which denote large size, before the following roots to make composite words.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. -----coat    | 4. -----taxi  |
| 2. -----drum    | 5. -----crash |
| 3. -----nucleus |               |

◎ [MICRO-]

In its prototypical sense, the prefix *micro-*, which is the antonym of the prefix *macro-*, expresses size. It has three nuances. (a) ‘minute size of the object stated in the root’. This sense follows when the nominal bases are concrete. For example, a *microhabitat* is a very small habitat, such as a clump of grass or a space between rocks, a *microfossil* is a fossil so small that it can be studied and identified only with a microscope, and a *micro-organism* is a very small organism which cannot be seen with the naked eye. (b) ‘very small size of the instrument stated in the root’. This sense follows when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *microscope* is an instrument for making an enlarged image of a minute object, and a *microphone* is an instrument for converting sound waves into electrical energy which may then be amplified, transmitted or recorded. (c) ‘do the thing stated in the root on a small scale’. This sense follows when the nominal bases are abstract. For example, *microsurgery* is surgery performed using a microscope on very small areas of a body, and *microbrewery* is a brewery which produces limited quantities of beer.

In its peripheral sense, the prefix *micro-* expresses measurement. It means ‘one millionth of the unit stated in the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *micrometer* is a unit of length equal to one millionth of a metre. Similar nouns are *microampere*, *microfarad*, *microgram*, *microsecond*, *microvolt*, and so on.

◎ [MID-]

The prefix *mid-* is used chiefly to denote order in time. This sense can be paraphrased in two ways. (a) ‘the middle part of the period of time cited in the root’. This sense proceeds when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, a *midterm* is the middle of a political term in office, an academic calendar or of a pregnancy. Other nouns are *mid-month*, *mid-night*, *mid-May*, *midweek*, *midwinter*, and so on. (b) ‘the action cited in the root is not completed yet’. This sense proceeds when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, a *midcareer* is the halfway stage of one’s career. Other nouns are *mid-flight*, *mid-flow*, *mid-prelude*, *mid-race*, *mid-stride*, and so on.

The prefix *mid-* is used marginally to denote order in space. It expresses the sense ‘the central part of the place denoted by the root’. This sense proceeds when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *mid-air collision* is a

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collision that takes place in the air or the sky. Other nouns are *midbrain*, *mid-Europe*, *midfield*, *mid-road*, *mid-sea*, and so on.

### ◎ [MIDI-]

In the most basic sense, the prefix *midi-* indicates size. It can be defined as ‘medium size of the object mentioned in the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *midi-skirt* is a skirt with the hemline at mid-calf. A handful of other nouns include *midi-coat*, *midi-dress*, *midi-file*, and so on.

In a marginal sense, the prefix *midi-* indicates duration, the period of time during which an event exists or lasts. It can be defined as ‘medium time of the event mentioned in the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, a *midi-event* is an event of medium duration.

### ◎ [MINI-]

The central function of the prefix *mini-* signals size. It means ‘diminutive size of the object denoted by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *mini-car* is a very small car. A collection of other nouns includes *mini-camera*, *mini-dress*, *mini-gun*, *mini-piano*, *mini-skirt*, and so on.

The peripheral function of the prefix *mini-* signals degree. It means ‘the thing named in the root is of limited scope or intensity’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, a *mini-stroke* is a temporary blockage of the blood flow to the brain caused by a blood clot. A collection of other nouns includes *mini-boom*, *mini-budget*, *mini-course*, *mini-summit*, *mini-tour*, and so on.

### Exercise 4.3

Write the prefixes *micro-* or *mini-*, which denote small size, before the following roots to make composite words.

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. -----fossil | 4. -----summit |
| 2. -----piano  | 5. -----camera |
| 3. -----phone  |                |

◎ [POST-]

Primarily, the prefix *post-* is tasked with designating order in time. This sense can be restated in two ways. (a) ‘after the period named in the root’. This sense applies when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *post-war reconstruction* is reconstruction that happens in the period after a war. Other nouns are *post-ceremony*, *post-election*, *post-operation*, *post-race*, *post-sixth-century*, and so on. The same is true of adjectival bases, as in *post-doctoral research*, *post-industrial society*, *post-natal care*, *post-operative complications*, and so on. (b) ‘a revised view of the theory named in the root’. This sense applies when the nominal bases are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *post-structuralism* is a philosophy that rejects structuralism’s claims to objectivity and emphasizes the plurality of meaning. Other nouns are *postfeminism*, *postmodernism*, and so on.

Secondarily, the prefix *post-* is tasked with designating order in space. It means ‘behind the place named in the root’. This sense applies when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, *postcentral convolutions* are convolutions which are situated behind a centre. Other adjectives are *postanal groove*, *postocular spine*, *postoral segment*, and so on.

◎ [PRE-]

Most commonly, the prefix *pre-* embodies order in time. This sense can be paraphrased in three ways. (a) ‘preceding the period indicated in the root’. This sense shows up when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, a *pre-dinner drink* is a drink taken before dinner. Other nouns are *pre-election campaign*, *pre-fourteenth-century document*, *pre-job education*, *pre-match training*, *pre-Roman paintings*, and so on. (b) ‘carrying out in advance the action indicated in the root’. This sense shows up when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *to pre-empt* is to prevent someone from doing something by doing it first. Other verbs are *pre-establish*, *pre-judge*, *pre-pay*, *pre-release*, *pre-view*, and so on. (c) ‘surpassing others in the quality indicated in the root’. This sense shows up when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, a *pre-eminent person* is a person who surpasses others in being exceptionally distinguished. Other adjectives are *pre-dominant*, *pre-potent*, and so on.

Less commonly, the prefix *pre-* embodies order in space. It has the sense ‘located before the place indicated in the root’. This sense shows up when the



adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, a *prefrontal lobe* is the part located before the frontal lobe. Other examples are *pre-axial bone*, *pre-dorsal region*, *pre-molar teeth*, *pre-ocular branch*, *pre-orbital muscle*, and so on.

Exercise 4.4

Assign a meaning to each of the prefixes which make up the following composite words.

1. post-race

post-ocular

post-modernism
2. pre-pay

pre-match

pre-dominant

4.1.2 Adjective-forming prefixes

An adjective-forming prefix, also called an **adjectival prefix** or an **adjectivizer**, is a bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to derive a new adjective. The free morpheme can be a verb, an adjective or a noun. The process of deriving a new adjective from different word classes is referred to as **adjectivalization**. Adjective-forming prefixes in English include *hyper-*, *inter-*, *intra-*, *super-* and *ultra-*. Below is the semantic network of each prefix.

◉ [HYPER-]

The basic sense of the prefix *hyper-* highlights degree. It means ‘having too much of the quality signalled by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, a *hyper-active person* is a person who is abnormally active to the extent of lacking the ability to concentrate. Examples of other adjectives are *hyper-clear*, *hyper-creative*, *hyper-elegant*, *hyper-modern*, *hyper-natural*, and so on. The same meaning applies to nominal bases. For example, *hypertension* is abnormally high blood pressure. Examples of other nouns are *hypercharge*, *hyperinflation*, *hyperthermia*, *hyperventilation*, and so on.

The minor sense of the prefix *hyper-* highlights size. It means ‘vastly bigger than the thing signalled by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *hypermarket* is a huge self-service market usually situated on the outskirts of a town.

◎ [INTER-]

In its regular occurrences, the prefix *inter-* symbolizes order in space, getting two semantic niceties. (a) ‘between the entities stated in the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are concrete, denoting humans. For example, *interfamily disputes* are disputes which exist or occur between different families. Other examples are *interclass*, *inter-union*, *inter-university*, and so on. The same sense applies to adjectival bases, as in *intercollegiate*, *inter-racial*, *intertribal*, and so on. (b) ‘between the places stated in the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are concrete, denoting non-humans. For example, *an inter-city train* is a train that travels between cities. Other examples are *inter-canal*, *inter-chapter*, *inter-continent*, *inter-quarter*, *inter-spiral*, and so on.

In its rare occurrences, the prefix *inter-* symbolizes order in time, getting two semantic niceties. (a) ‘the action stated in the root takes place reciprocally’. This sense materializes when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *interaction* is an action that has a reciprocal effect. Other examples are *interchange*, *interdependence*, *intermediation*, *interplay*, *interrelation*, and so on. The same sense applies to verbs and adjectives derived from these nouns. For example, *interdependent* means dependent on each other. (b) ‘occurring between the time of the things stated in the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *interwar years* are years which relate to the period of time between the two world wars.

◎ [INTRA-]

A common sense of the prefix *intra-* underlines order in space. It bears two semantic subtleties. (a) ‘within the entity stated in the root’. This sense realizes when the nominal roots are concrete, denoting humans. For example, *intra-community trade* is trade carried out within a single community. Similar examples are *intra-state*, and so on. The same sense applies to adjectival bases as in *intra-African*, *intra-marginal*, *intra-racial*, *intra-regional*, and so on. (b) ‘within the place stated in the root’. This sense realizes when the adjectival bases are non-gradable, especially in biological terms. For example, *intracellular fluid* is fluid that is situated within a cell. Similar examples are *intra-bronchial*, *intracapsular*, *intramural*, *intramolecular*, *intranasal*, and so on.

A somewhat uncommon sense of the prefix *intra-* underlines order in time. It bears the sense ‘during the period of time stated in the root’. This sense

realizes when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, an *intraday movement* is a movement which occurs during a single day.

### Exercise 4.5

Name the semantic contributions of the prefixes *inter-* and *intra-*, and define the composite words which they make.

1. interparty debate
2. intraparty debate

© [SUPER-]

The predominant sense of the prefix *super-* is one of degree. It subsumes three particularities. (a) ‘beyond the range of the trait mentioned in the root’. This sense occurs when the adjectival bases are gradable, applying to humans. For example, a *superhuman effort* is an effort that is much greater than normal. Similar adjectives are *super-active*, *super-clever*, *super-friendly*, *super-intelligent*, *super-rich*, and so on. (b) ‘exceeding the norms of the feature mentioned in the root’. This sense occurs when the adjectival roots are gradable, applying to non-humans. For example, a *super-cheap article* is an article that is extremely cheap. Similar adjectives are *super-efficient*, *super-modern*, *super-precious*, *super-quick*, *super-secure*, and so on. (c) ‘being greater in power than the thing mentioned in the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are common personal nouns. For example, a *super-model* is a model who is very successful or famous. Similar nouns are *super-athlete*, *super-genius*, *super-hero*, *super-leader*, *super-man*, and so on.

In the periphery, the prefix *super-* subsumes three particularities. (a) ‘hugely bigger in size than the thing signalled by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are concrete, denoting inanimate entities. For example, a *supertanker* is a very large cargo ship able to carry a large amount of oil. Similar nouns are *super-ferry*, *super-jumbo*, *supermarket*, *super-computer*, *superpower*, and so on. (b) ‘built on the thing mentioned in the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, denoting inanimate entities. For example, a *superstructure* is a structure built on top of something else. Similar nouns are *superaltar*, *superscript*, *supermarine*, *superstratum*, *supertax*, and so on. (c) ‘ranked higher than the category mentioned in the root’.

This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, denoting animate entities. For example, a *superorder* is a category of biological classification ranking above an order. Similar nouns are *superclass*, *superfamily*, *superspecies*, and so on.

◎ [ULTRA-]

Most prevalantly, the prefix *ultra-* represents degree in physical terms. It means 'lying beyond the feature given in the root'. This sense occurs when the adjectival roots are non-gradable. For example, *ultra-violet rays* are rays which lie beyond the violet end of the visible spectrum. A list of other adjectives includes *ultra-mundane space*, *ultra-sonic wave*, and so on.

Less prevalently, the prefix *ultra-* represents degree in non-physical terms. It has two senses. (a) 'far beyond the normal degree of the characteristic given in the root'. This sense occurs when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, an *ultra-nationalist* is a person who is extremely devoted to the interests of his or her own nation. A list of other adjectives includes *ultra-feminist groups*, *ultra-leftist backers*, *ultra-leftwing supporters*, and so on. (b) 'transcending the limits of the trait given in the root'. This sense occurs when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, an *ultramodern home* is a home that extremely modern or up-to-date. A list of other adjectives includes *ultra-chic jeans*, *ultra-confident people*, *ultra-loyal customers*, *ultra-modest stars*, *ultra-smart softwares*, and so on.

## Exercise 4.6

In the examples listed below, the prefixes *super-* and *ultra-* can, relative to the combining bases, have different interpretations. State them.

- |                 |       |                |       |
|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| 1. super-clever | ----- | 2. ultra-short | ----- |
| super-leader    | ----- | ultra-loyal    | ----- |
| super-ferry     | ----- | ultra-leftwing | ----- |

### 4.1.3 Verb-forming prefixes

A verb-forming prefix, also called a **verbal prefix** or a **verbalizer**, is a bound morpheme that is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to derive a verb. The free morpheme can be an adjective or a noun. The process of deriving a verb from different word classes is referred to as **verbalization**. Verb-forming

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prefixes in English include *be-* and *en(m)-*. Below is the semantic network of each prefix.

### ◉ [BE-]

The general tendency of the prefix *be-* signifies causation in three semantically subtle ways. (a) 'do the action denoted by the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *to bemoan* is to grieve over or express sorrow for something. Similar verbs include *begrudge*, *beguile*, *berate*, *besiege*, and so on. (b) 'cover something with the substance denoted by the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *to bespatter* is to splash something with liquid, mud or paint. Similar verbs include *bedew*, *befog*, *bejewel*, *bemire*, *besprinkle*, and so on. (c) 'cause an entity to be in the state denoted by the root'. This sense surfaces when the adjectival roots are gradable. For example, *to belittle* is to make someone or something seem less in size, value or importance. Similar verbs include *becalm*, *bedim*, *befoul*, and so on.

The less general tendency of the prefix *be-* signifies intensification, involving the sense 'do the action denoted by the root completely'. This sense surfaces when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *to bedazzle* is to impress somebody greatly, and *to bemuse* is to make something utterly confused or muddled.

### ◉ [EN(M)-]

Prototypical examples of the prefix *en-*, or *em-* which appears before the bilabial consonants /b/ and /p/, express causation in four ways. (a) 'do the action named in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, *to enlist* is to join the armed forces. Additional verbs are *embattle*, *enchant*, *enjoy*, *entwine*, *entwist*, and so on. (b) 'provide an entity with the thing named by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *to encourage* is provide somebody with hope or confidence. Additional verbs are *empower*, *enforce*, *enrapture*, *entrench*, *entrust*, and so on. (c) 'put an entity in the thing named by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *to encase* is to put something in a case. Additional verbs are *encage*, *enchain*, *enrobe*, *enshroud*, *entomb*, and so on. (d) 'confer on the entity the condition named by the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival

roots are gradable. For example, *to enfeeble* is to make somebody weak. Additional verbs are *embitter*, *enlarge*, *ennoble*, *enrich*, *ensure*, and so on.

A peripheral example of the prefix *en-* expresses intensification, involving the sense ‘do the action named by the root intensely’. This sense appears when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *to enfold* is to cover somebody or something completely. More examples are *emblaze*, *enkindle*, *ensnare*, *enwind*, and so on.

### Exercise 4.7

Give two meanings for the verbal prefixes below. Then, write composite words to make the meanings clear.

- |        |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 1. be- | ----- | ----- |
|        | ----- | ----- |
| 2. en- | ----- | ----- |
|        | ----- | ----- |

## 4.2 Negative prefixes

A negative prefix is a bound morpheme which is added in front of a semantically-positive free morpheme to form a new word. The prefix signals either oppositeness or adverseness. For example, *non-* is a bound morpheme that is dependent on the free morpheme *professional* to form the negative word *nonprofessional*, which means ‘one who is not professional’. Negative prefixes in English include *a(n)-*, *ab-*, *anti-*, *contra-*, *counter-*, *de-*, *dis-*, *in-*, *mal-*, *mis-*, *non-*, *pseudo-*, *quasi-*, *semi-*, *sub-*, *un-* and *under-*.

### 4.2.1 Oppositeness-signalling prefixes

An oppositeness-signalling prefix indicates the opposite of the free morpheme to which it is attached. It describes that one entity is in sharp contrast or completely different from another. Oppositeness-signalling prefixes include *a(n)-*, *ab-*, *de-*, *dis-*, *in-*, *non-* and *un-*. Below is the semantic network of each prefix.

#### ◎ [A(N)-]

In its principal sense, the prefix *a(n)-*, where the *n* appears before words beginning with a vowel as in *anaesthesia*, spells out distinction with two nuances.

(a) ‘divergent from the quality referred to by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival bases are gradable, describing humans. For example, *an amoral person* is a person who does not have moral principles. Further examples include *apolitical organization*, *asocial behaviour*, and so on. (b) ‘unlike the quality referred to by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival bases are non-gradable, describing non-humans. For example, *an ahistorical phenomenon* is a phenomenon that is not related to history. Further examples include *asymmetrical haircut*, *atemporal sphere*, and so on.

In its minor sense, the prefix *a(n)-* gives rise to two nuances. (a) ‘without the thing referred to by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival bases are non-gradable, describing concrete entities. It is chiefly used in medical terms. For example, *aglossal* means without a tongue. Further examples include *acardiac*, *acaudal*, *achromatic*, *anhydrous*, and so on. (b) ‘not adhering to the belief referred to by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal bases are common personal nouns. For example, *an anarchist* is a person who advocates the abolition of governments. Further examples include *atheist*, *agnostic*, and so on.

#### ◎ [AB-]

In its primary sense, the prefix *ab-* embodies distinction. Its sense can be reworded in two different ways. (a) ‘deviating from the state expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, *abnormal* means deviating from the state of being normal. (b) ‘locating opposite the thing expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, *abaxial* means located opposite the axis, and *aboral* means located away from the mouth.

In its peripheral sense, the prefix *ab-* embodies action. This sense follows when the verbal bases are transitive. The sense can be reworded in two different ways. (a) ‘wrongly perform the action expressed by the root’. For example, *abuse* is the act of treating someone cruelly or inhumanely. (b) ‘release one from the action expressed by the root’. For example, *absolve* is the act of releasing someone from obligations, debt or guilt.

#### ◎ [DE-]

Most commonly, the prefix *de-* symbolizes oppositeness, occurring in three semantic patterns. (a) ‘reversing the action described by the root’. This sense

appears when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *to decontrol* is to free something from restraints. In other cases, the prefix is affixed to verbs derived from nouns by means of the suffixes *-ate*, *-ify* and *-ise*, as in *decentralize*, *declassify*, *de-escalate*, *demilitarize*, *destabilize*, and so on. (b) 'removing the thing described by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *to debug* is to remove defects in a device, system or plan. Other verbs are *degas*, *de-ice*, *demist*, and so on. (c) 'depriving of the thing described by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *to deform* is to deprive something of its natural form or spoil its appearance. Other verbs are *decolour*, *deface*, and so on.

Less commonly, the prefix *de-* occurs in four semantic patterns. (a) 'reducing the thing described by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *to debase* is to lower the quality, character or value of something. Other verbs are *declass*, *degrade*, *devalue*, and so on. (b) 'analysing the thing described in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, *to decode* is to decipher something, especially something written in code. Other verbs are *deconstruct*, *demystify*, and so on. (c) 'getting off the vehicle described by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *to debus* is to alight from a bus. Other verbs are *deplane*, *detrain*, and so on. (d) 'cancelling the thing described in the root'. This sense appears when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *to decouple* is to cancel the relationship between two things, and *to decommission* is to dismantle or close down something.

#### ◎ [DIS-]

The most evident sense of the prefix *dis-* is distinction. It displays two semantic niceties. (a) 'the converse of the quality signified by the root'. This sense emerges when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, *disobedient* is the converse of *obedient*. A collection of other examples includes *disingenuous*, *disobliging*, *dispassionate*, *disreputable*, *dissimilar*, and so on. (b) 'unwilling to do the action signified by the root'. This sense emerges when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *to disbelieve* is unwilling to believe somebody or something. A collection of other examples includes *disapprove*, *dislike*, *displease*, *disremember*, *distrust*, and so on.

The less evident sense of the prefix *dis-* is oppositeness. It displays three semantic niceties. (a) 'turning around the action signified by the root'.



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This sense emerges when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *to discharge* is to release somebody from a duty or obligation. A collection of other examples include *disempower*, *disengage*, *disentangle*, and so on. (b) ‘ridding of the thing signified by the root’. This sense emerges when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *to dispossess* is to deprive somebody of a property. A collection of other examples includes *disenfranchise*, *displace*, *disqualify*, and so on. (c) ‘lacking the thing signified by the root’. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *disbelief* means a lack of belief. A collection of other examples includes *discomfort*, *discourtesy*, *disharmony*, *disobedience*, *disrespect*, and so on.

## Exercise 4.8

Change the meanings of the words listed below by adding appropriate negative prefixes to them.

- |             |       |           |       |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1. mist     | ----- | 4. grade  | ----- |
| 2. courtesy | ----- | 5. normal | ----- |
| 3. temporal | ----- |           |       |

### © [IN-]

In its most frequent sense, the prefix *in-* marks distinction in quality. It has two semantic functions. (a) ‘the opposite of the quality expressed by the root’. This sense applies when the adjectival roots are gradable. For example, *inaccurate* is the opposite of *accurate*. Examples of other words are *incomplete*, *indiscreet*, *illegal*, *irrational*, *insecure*, and so on. (b) ‘empty of the quality expressed by the root’. This sense applies when the nominal bases are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *insanity* means lack of reason or good sense. Examples of other words are *imbalance*, *incompetence*, *inequality*, *ingratitude*, *injustice*, and so on.

In its less frequent sense, the prefix *in-* marks distinction in action. It has two semantic functions. (a) ‘unable to do the action expressed by the root’. This sense applies when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *indecision* means inability to make a choice. Examples of other words are *inaction*, *inattention*, *incomprehension*, *indisposition*, *inexperience*, and so on. (b) ‘cannot undergo the action expressed by the root’. This sense applies when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, *incomprehensible* means

that which cannot be understood. Examples of other words are *incalculable*, *inexpressible*, *implausible*, *intolerable*, *invisible*, and so on.

◎ [NON-]

On a regular basis, the prefix *non-* represents distinction. It imparts three senses. (a) 'failing to do the action described by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *non-compliance* is failure or refusal to comply. Other words include *non-adherence*, *non-cooperation*, *non-interference*, *non-payment*, *non-resistance*, and so on. (b) 'not belong to the thing described by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are concrete, denoting actors. For example, *a non-member* is a person who does not belong to a club, political party, and so on. Other words include *non-believer*, *non-reader*, *non-resident*, *non-smoker*, *non-subscriber*, and so on. (c) 'different from the quality described by the root'. This sense occurs when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, *a non-economic approach* is an approach that is not economic. Other words include *non-academic*, *non-addictive*, *non-aggressive*, *non-partisan*, *non-verbal*, and so on. In some formations, the prefix is connected with bases denoting nationality. For example, *non-British* is someone who is not British.

Occasionally, the prefix *non-* imparts two senses. (a) 'having little or no merit of the thing described by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *a non-book* is a book which has little or no literary substance, often published to exploit a fad. Other words include *non-answer*, *non-entity*, *non-fiction*, *non-issue*, *non-problem*, and so on. In a few formations, the nouns refer to humans. For example, *a non-descript* is a person who is devoid of distinctiveness, and *a non-person* is a person who is devoid of importance. (b) 'resisting the action described by the root'. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *a non-iron suit* is a suit that does not require ironing because of being crease-resistant. Other words are *non-skid*, *non-slip*, *non-stick*, and so on.

◎ [UN-]

The prefix *un-* is primarily designed to stand for distinction. It has two semantic variants. (a) 'the antithesis of what is specified by the root'. This sense applies when the adjectival bases are gradable, applying to humans.

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For example, *unfair* is the antithesis of *fair*. A handful of other words includes *unaware*, *unfaithful*, *unhelpful*, *ungrateful*, *unwise*, and so on. In some cases, it describes nationality. For example, *unBritish* means the antithesis of a British national in characteristics. (b) ‘distinct from what is specified by the root’. This sense applies when the adjectival bases are non-gradable, applying to non-humans. For example, *unofficial* means contrary to being official. A handful of other words includes *unclear*, *uncommon*, *unnecessary*, *unremarkable*, *unsafe*, and so on.

The prefix *un-* is marginally designed to stand for oppositeness. It has three semantic variants. (a) ‘inverting what is specified by the root’. This sense applies when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *unclose* means inverting the action of closing. A handful of other words includes *unclench*, *unfreeze*, *unloose*, *unpack*, *unscrew*, and so on. (b) ‘taking away what is specified by the root’. This sense applies when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *unchain* means removing a chain from somebody or something. A handful of other words includes *unbrace*, *unhand*, *unhook*, *unmask*, *unseat*, and so on. (c) ‘bereft of what is specified by the root’. This sense applies when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *unease* means something is bereft of ease. A handful of other words include *unbelief*, *unconcern*, *unintelligence*, *unrest*, *untruth*, and so on.

Exercise 4.9

Below are examples of words negated by the prefixes *in-* and *un-*. Identify the function of the prefix in each example.

1. in-		2. un-	
insecure	-----	unwise	-----
invisible	-----	unsafe	-----
injustice	-----	unpack	-----
inaction	-----	unmask	-----
irrational	-----	unrest	-----

4.2.2 Adverseness-signalling prefixes

An adverseness-signalling prefix indicates the adverse of the free morpheme to which it is attached. It implies that one entity acts against another or is opposed to another in direction. Adverseness-signalling prefixes include *anti-*, *contra-*, *counter-*, *mal-*, *mis-*, *pseudo-*, *quasi-*, *semi-*, *sub-* and *under-*. Below is the semantic network of each prefix.

◎ [ANTI-]

Quite frequently, the prefix *anti-* characterizes opposition. It depicts three semantic variances. (a) ‘reacting against the practice named by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *an anti-abortion campaign* is a campaign that opposes the practice of abortion. Other examples are *anti-apartheid*, *anti-discrimination*, *anti-establishment*, *anti-war*, and so on. (b) ‘opposed to the concept named by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal bases are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *an anti-racist alliance* is an alliance that is opposed to the concept of racism. Other examples are *anti-capitalist*, *anti-communist*, *anti-fascist*, *anti-federalist*, *anti-imperialist*, and so on. (c) ‘displaying the opposite characteristics of the thing named by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are abstract, implying characteristics. For example, *anti-climax* displays the opposite characteristics of a climax such as triviality and insignificance. Other examples are *anti-hero*, *antiparticle*, and so on.

Less frequently, the prefix *anti-* characterizes obstruction. It depicts three semantic variances. (a) ‘preventing the disease named by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *an anti-cancer therapy* is a therapy used to combat cancer. Other examples are *anti-bacteria*, *anti-cholesterol*, *anti-coagulant*, and so on. (b) ‘hindering the action named by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *anti-freeze liquid* is liquid that hinders something from freezing. Other examples are *anti-inflation*, *anti-pollution*, and so on. (c) ‘defending against the weapon named by the root’. This sense happens when the nominal bases are concrete. For example, *an anti-aircraft weapon* is a weapon designed to defend against aircraft attack. Other examples are *anti-missile*, *anti-tank*, and so on.

◎ [CONTRA-]

The prefix *contra-* has the general sense of opposition. It evokes two nuances. (a) ‘in comparison with the thing mentioned in the root’. This sense arises when the nominal bases are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *a contra-distinction* is a distinction that is in comparison with another. A list of other examples includes *contra-indication*, *contra-position*, and so on. (b) ‘posed against the action mentioned in the root’. This sense arises when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *a contra-flow* is

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a flow in a traffic system posed against another, and *contra-rotation* is a circular motion in a direction posed against another.

In a minor sense, the prefix *contra-* depicts degree. It means ‘pitched lower or higher than the instrument mentioned in the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete, denoting musical instruments. For example, *a contrabass* is an instrument pitched below the bass. A list of other examples includes *contragamba*, *contratenor*, and so on.

◉ [COUNTER-]

A prototypical instantiation of the prefix *counter-* denotes opposition. It has two semantic shades. **(a)** ‘standing against the thing designated by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal bases are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *a counter-example* is an example that stands against another in an argument. Other examples are *counter-evidence*, *counter-point*, *counter-propaganda*, *counter-proposal*, *counter-strategy*, and so on. **(b)** ‘facing the action or activity designated by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, *a countermove* is a move that faces another in retaliation. Other examples are *counter-blow*, *counter-espionage*, *counter-march*, *counter-measure*, *counter-punch*, and so on.

A peripheral instantiation of the prefix *counter-* denotes correspondence. It has two semantic shades. **(a)** ‘matching the thing designated by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *a counter-part* is a person or thing that corresponds to or has the same function as another. Other examples are *counter-balance*, *counter-poise*, *counter-scale*, *counter-stock*, *counter-type*, and so on. **(b)** ‘duplicating the thing designated by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *a counter-check* is a double check, as for accuracy, and *a counter-signature* is a second signature added to witness the first signature or to confirm an authorization.

Exercise 4.10

In the following composite words, the prefixes *anti-* and *counter-* express three different meanings. What are they?

1. anti-	2. counter
anti-missile	counter-balance
anti-fascism	counter-measure
anti-bacteria	counter-evidence

◉ [MAL-]

With the prefix *mal-*, the sense that occurs most frequently is treatment. It has two definitions. (a) ‘inappropriately executing the action denoted by the root’. This sense manifests when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *to maladminister* is to administer badly, inefficiently or dishonestly. More words are *maladjust*, *malfunction*, *malpractice*, *maltreat*, and so on. (b) ‘inappropriate execution of the thing denoted by the root’. This sense manifests when the nominal bases are abstract, implying result. For example, *maldistribution* is a faulty, unequal or unfair distribution. More words are *malabsorption*, *maladjustment*, *malcontent*, *malformation*, *maltreatment*, and so on.

With the prefix *mal-*, the sense that occurs less frequently is condition. It is defined as ‘not characterized by the thing denoted by the root’. This sense manifests when the adjectival bases are gradable. For example, *a maladroitness manner* is manner that is not characterized by tactfulness in behaviour. More words are *maladjusted condition*, *malformed body*, *malodorous neighbourhood*, *malnourished children*, and so on.

◉ [MIS-]

The prefix *mis-* most often indicates treatment. It has two semantic specifications. (a) ‘falsely performing the action conveyed by the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *to misconceive* is to conceive in the wrong way. Additional examples include *misapprehend*, *misconstrue*, *misinterpret*, *misjudge*, *misquote*, and so on. (b) ‘false performance of the thing conveyed by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are abstract, implying result. For example, *mismanagement* is bad or wrong management. Additional examples include *misappropriation*, *miscalculation*, *misinformation*, *mistreatment*, *misunderstanding*, and so on.

The prefix *mis-* less often indicates misdeed. It has the sense ‘improper performance of the thing conveyed by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are abstract, implying action. For example, *a misdemeanour* is a minor offence. Additional examples include *misadventure*, *misbehaviour*, *miscarriage*, *misconduct*, *misshape*, and so on.

◉ [PSEUDO-]

The core instance of the prefix *pseudo-* is inadequacy. It has two subtleties. (a) ‘posing as the thing indicated by the root’. This sense arises when the

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adjectival bases are gradable. For example, a *pseudo-democratic system* is a system that appears to be democratic, but it is not. Other examples are *pseudo-dramatic event*, *pseudo-natural image*, and so on. In some formations, the bases are nominal. For example, a *pseudo-science* is a theory which is not formed in a scientific way. Other examples are *pseudo-military*, *pseudo-oak*, and so on. (b) ‘pretending to be the thing indicated by the root’. This meaning arises when the nominal bases are common personal nouns. For example, a *pseudo-friend* is one who appears to be a friend, but s/he is not really so. Other examples are *pseudo-clergy*, *pseudo-intellectual*, *pseudo-scientist*, and so on.

The peripheral instance of the prefix *pseudo-* is resemblance. It means ‘simulating the thing indicated by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete, often used in technical applications. For example, a *pseudo-carp* is a fruit such as strawberry which includes parts other than the ripened ovary. Other examples are *pseudo-acid*, *pseudo-bulb*, *pseudo-scorpion*, and so on.

## Exercise 4.11

The following composite words begin with the prefixes *mal-* and *mis-*. What kind of meaning do the prefixes contribute to them?

1. mal		2. mis	
malfunction	-----	misadventure	-----
malodorous	-----	misapprehend	-----
malformation	-----	miscalculation	-----

### ⊙ [QUASI-]

With the prefix *quasi-*, inadequacy is considered the prototype. It means ‘partly the same as that denoted by the root’. This sense materializes when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, a *quasi-autonomous company* is a company that is in some ways independent and has the power to make its own decisions. Other examples are *quasi-judicial body*, *quasi-legal right*, *quasi-official agency*, and so on.

With the prefix *quasi-*, resemblance is considered the periphery. It means ‘seemingly the same as the thing denoted by the root’. This sense materializes when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, a *quasi-scientific approach* is an approach that is apparently but not really scientific. Other

examples are *quasi-crystal surface*, *quasi-historical process*, *quasi-military strategy*, and so on.

◎ [SEMI-]

The prefix *semi-* is used in its prototypical sense to express inadequacy. It has two semantic specializations. (a) 'almost but not entirely the thing described in the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival bases are (non)gradable. For example, a *semi-conscious patient* is one who is partially conscious. Other examples include *semi-detached house*, *semi-formal request*, *semi-literate user*, *semi-private hospital*, *semi-sweet chocolate*, and so on. The same sense is true of a nominal base. For example, a *semi-final* is the stage before the final. (b) 'having some characteristics of the thing described in the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, a *semi-tropical area* is an area that is like the tropics. Other examples include *semi-elliptical crack*, *semi-lunar valve*, *semi-official approval*, and so on. The same sense arises when the base is nominal. For example, a *semi-vowel* is like a vowel, something in between a consonant and a vowel in character.

In its peripheral sense, the prefix *semi-* expresses frequency. It has two semantic specializations. (a) 'occurring twice during the period described in the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival bases are non-gradable, denoting units of time. For example, a *semi-weekly event* is an event which occurs twice a week. Other examples include *semi-annual report*, *semi-monthly publication*, *semi-yearly event*, and so on. (b) 'half the thing described in the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, a *semi-circular figure* is a figure that has the character of one half of a circle. Other examples include *semi-aquatic flora*, *semi-automatic rifle*, and so on. The same sense applies to a nominal root. For example, *semi-tone* means half a tone. Other examples include *semicircle*, *semi-dome*, and so on.

◎ [SUB-]

The sense of location is the archetype of the prefix *sub-*. It means 'below or beneath the thing named by the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal bases are concrete. For example, a *submarine* is a vessel capable of operating below the surface of the sea. Other examples include *sub-current*, *sub-floor*, *sub-railway*, *subsoil*, *sub-structure*, and so on.



The sense of degradation is the periphery of the prefix *sub-*. It acquires three particularities. (a) 'a subdivision of the thing named by the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are concrete or abstract. For example, *a sub-group* is a subdivision of a group. Other examples include *sub-base*, *sub-branch*, *sub-committee*, *sub-district*, *sub-title*, and so on. In some formations, the bases are verbal such as *sub-classify*, *sub-colonise*, *sub-divide*, *sub-lease*, *sub-let*, and so on. (b) 'almost or nearly the thing named by the root'. This sense surfaces when the adjectival bases are non-gradable. For example, *sub-standard goods* are goods which are less than standard in quality or size. Other examples include *sub-clinical infection*, *sub-fertile person*, *sub-literate adult*, *sub-normal child*, *sub-tropical cyclone*, and so on. (c) 'subordinate in rank to the person named by the root'. This sense surfaces when the nominal bases are common personal nouns. For example, *a sub-dean* is a deputy or substitute of a dean. Other examples include *sub-editor*, *sub-governor*, *sub-officer*, *sub-treasurer*, *sub-warden*, and so on.

#### ◎ [UNDER-]

Predominant in the network of the prefix *under-* is the sense of location. It has the meaning 'below or underneath the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *underwear* is clothing worn under other clothes next to the skin. Examples of other nouns include *underclothes*, *undercurrent*, *underground*, *underpass*, *undertow*, and so on.

Subordinate in the network of the prefix *under-* is the sense of degradation. It has two semantic niceties. (a) 'less in degree or quantity than the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *to undervalue* is to consider something as less valuable or important than it really is. Examples of other verbs, and the adjectives derived from them, include *under-estimate*, *under-grow*, *under-pay*, *under-state*, *under-use*, and so on. (b) 'lower in rank than the person expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal bases are common personal nouns. For example, *an underachiever* is a person who performs less well or achieves less success than expected. Examples of other nouns include *undergraduate*, *undersecretary*, and so on. The same sense is true when the prefix is annexed to numbers. For example *under-fives* are children who are younger than 5 years old.

Exercise 4.12

Match the composite words listed below with the meanings associated with the prefixes *sub-* and *under-*.

sub-officer, sub-floor, sub-branch    underestimate, undersecretary, underpass

1. sub-		2. under-	
rank	-----	rank	-----
position	-----	position	-----
structure	-----	insufficiency	-----

Summary

In this chapter, I examined the role of the category theory in the semantic description of prefixes. In view of this theory, any prefix forms a category of distinct but related senses. A **category** is a network of senses structured in terms of prototype and periphery. The **prototype** is the most representative or most salient instance of the category. The **periphery** is the remaining senses derived from the prototype via semantic extensions. Each sense acquires a distinct definition. The distinction between the different senses of a prefix is a consequence of the different environments in which it occurs. The interpretation of a composite word thus follows from the meaning of the prefix together with the meaning of the free morpheme to which it is added. In each formation, the prefix provides a certain type of semantic information. The polysemy of a prefix is not random. Rather, it is structured in that there are semantic principles which account for the sense extensions. As lexical items, prefixes are dynamic in nature. The meanings associated with them are not absolute or fixed. Rather, they are flexible and capable of extending over time and through use. On the basis of these definitions, it becomes feasible to group converging prefixes in domains. This task is discussed in the upcoming chapter.

Table 4.1 summarizes the different categories in which prefixes in English appear.

Table 4.1 Categories of prefixes

Prefixes				
Positive prefixes			Negative prefixes	
Noun-forming	Adjective-forming	Verb-forming	Oppositeness-signalling	Adverseness-signalling
ante-	hyper-	be-	a(n)-	anti-
fore-	inter-	en(m)-	ab-	contra-
macro-	intra-		de-	counter-
maxi-	super-		dis-	mal-
mega-	ultra-		in-	mis-
micro-			non-	pseudo-
mid-			un-	quasi-
midi-				semi-
mini-				sub-
post-				under-
pre-				

# Prefixal Domains

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Chapter 5 examines the semantic functions of English prefixes when they form lexical groups. Proceeding from the cognitive assumption that linguistic items not only come as individuals but also as groups, it is argued that prefixes form domains within which they occupy separate facets. Each facet represents a discrete human experience. Due to their polysemy, prefixes tend to partake in more than one domain. The purpose of the chapter is to reveal the precise roles which the prefixes play in language. The chapter falls into two sections. Section 5.1 introduces domains evoked by positive prefixes: degree, spatiality, temporality and size. Section 5.2 presents domains evoked by negative prefixes: distinction, opposition, privation, removal, reversal and treatment. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I illustrate the essence of the domain and draw its multi-faceted structure. Second, I identify the particular facet which a given prefix activates. Third, I provide examples to demonstrate the distinctive use of each prefix.

## 5.1 Domains evoked by positive prefixes

Primarily, a positive prefix emphasizes a positive statement or declaration of the truth or existence of something. Secondly, it is a morpheme which is added to a semantically positive free morpheme to signal affirmation. Positive prefixes form, relative to their definitional analyses, various cognitive domains. A **domain** is a knowledge structure in terms of which the exact role of a prefix can be defined. Within the domains, the prefixes occupy different facets. A **facet** is a definable part in a domain which represents a particular concept. Domains are important in the sense that to understand the meaning of any prefix it is necessary to understand the structure of the domain in which it occurs as well as the properties of the other members of the domain. The meaning of a prefix can be demarcated by the web of semantic relations it has with its counterparts. Below are the cognitive domains which positive prefixes evoke.

### 5.1.1 Degree

The domain of degree is a conceptual area referring to a stage in a scale of level or extent. It signals the relative grade or volume of something especially when compared with other things. As the definition reveals, degree consists of two main facets: grade or volume. Grade refers to the calibre or quality of an entity, be it animate or inanimate. The quality is in excess; it is much more than reasonable and goes far beyond the limit of what is acceptable. The facet can either refer to human emotions, whose degree exceeds what is normal, or to human beliefs, whose degree exceeds what is natural. Volume, by contrast, refers to the amount or quantity of something which is mostly inanimate. The quantity is in the extreme; it is very large in amount and goes beyond what is usual. The facet can either refer to events, whose degree exceeds what is regular, or to objects, whose degree exceeds what is expected.

Morphologically, the domain of **degree** is marked by the prefixes *hyper-*, *ultra-*, *super-*, *mega-*, and *sur-*. Although the prefixes denote degree, they are not interchangeable. Grade or quality is marked by the prefixes *hyper-*, *ultra-*, and *super-*. *Hyper-* means 'having too much of the quality signalled by the root'. It describes people's emotional reactions as being beyond what is tolerable. *Ultra-* means 'far beyond the normal degree of the characteristic given in the root'. It describes people's mental reactions as being beyond what is proper. Of the two, *hyper-* is greater than *ultra-* in terms of degree. *Super-* means 'exceeding the norms or limits of the feature mentioned in the root'. It describes the quality of products or materials as being extraordinary, freak or unusual. Volume or quantity is marked by the prefixes *mega-* and *sur-*. *Mega-* means 'surpassing the example given in the root'. It describes events, their performers or their outcomes as being phenomenal, unique or exceptional. *Sur-* means 'exceeding the amount given in the root'. It describes things as being additional or extra. Of the two, *mega-* is greater than *sur-* in terms of degree.

Let us now scrutinize some examples to see if the prefixes serve different purposes within the domain.

- (1) a. hypercritical, hyper-cautious, hyper-alert
- b. ultra-conservative, ultra-left, ultra-right
- c. superfine, supercheap, super-efficient
- d. mega-hit, mega-tour, mega-deal
- e. surplus, surtax, surcharge

The examples under (1) contain words formed by adding prefixes to adjectival (a–c) and nominal (d–e) free morphemes. They present two aspects of the prefixes. First, the prefixes denote degree. Second, the prefixes embody different facets. In (1a), the prefix *hyper-* derives adjectives which highlight emotional traits. For example, *hypercritical* means ‘unreasonably critical by criticizing others too severely or too much’. In (1b), the prefix *ultra-* derives adjectives which highlight political beliefs. For example, *ultra-conservative* means ‘conservative to an extreme by having very preservative views’. In (1c), the prefix *super-* derives adjectives which characterize articles, especially of merchandise. For example, *superfine* means ‘very elegant and of exceptional quality’. In (1d), the prefix *mega-* derives nouns which characterize events, especially of entertainment. For example, *mega-hit* means ‘exceedingly successful by achieving widespread popularity and huge sales’. In (1e), the prefix *sur-* derives nouns which characterize additional quantities. For example, *surplus* means ‘the extra amount which is left when requirements have been met’.

### Exercise 5.1

Add prefixes denoting the domain of degree to the roots to match the meanings given.

- |                   |   |                               |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. -----deal      | = | a large business transaction. |
| 2. -----right     | = | extremely conservative.       |
| 3. -----cheap     | = | utterly low in price or cost. |
| 4. -----charge    | = | an additional payment.        |
| 5. -----conscious | = | abnormally conscious.         |

### 5.1.2 Spatiality

The domain of **spatiality** is a sphere of knowledge pointing to the position of things on an axis. An axis can be either horizontal or vertical. A horizontal axis refers to the linear arrangement of things, that is, their positions on a baseline or in comparison to one another. A vertical axis refers to the plumb arrangement of things, that is, their positions on an upright line. In terms of horizontal axis, spatiality includes three facets: front, middle and rear. Front is the position of something at the beginning. It refers to the part of something located opposite its rear. Middle is the position of something at the centre.

It refers to the part of something located between front and rear. The position serves to encompass interaction or involvement between two or more entities, no matter if they are animate or inanimate. Rear is the position of something at the back. It refers to the part of something located opposite its front.

Morphologically, the domain of **spatiality**, horizontal axis, is realized by the prefixes *ante-*, *fore-*, *mid-*, *inter-*, *intra-* and *post-*. Each prefix occupies a particular place in a linear order. *Ante-* means ‘in front of the place referred to by the root’. It depicts an entity as being situated before another. *Fore-* means ‘situated in front of the place mentioned in the root’. It sketches an entity, or its first part, as being situated in front of another. *Mid-* means ‘the central part of the place denoted by the root’. It portrays an entity as being in the middle of something. *Inter-* means ‘between the entities stated in the root’. It refers to interaction between entities in different places. *Intra-* means ‘within the entity stated in the root’. It refers to interaction between entities within the same place or group. *Post-* means ‘behind the place named in the root’. It describes an entity as being behind something else.

Let us now examine some examples to see if the prefixes fit different facets within the domain.

- (2) a. antechamber, ante-room
- b. forecourt, forecastle, foredeck
- c. midfield, midsection, midway
- d. inter-city, inter-office, inter-school
- e. intra-family, intra-party, intra-class
- f. postorbital, postaxial, postcentral

The examples under (2) contain words formed by adding prefixes to nominal (a–e) and adjectival (f) free morphemes, forming nouns in (a–c) and adjectives in (d–f). They reveal two facts about the prefixes. First, the prefixes indicate spatiality. Second, the prefixes symbolize different facets. In (2a) the prefix *ante-* describes the front part of a place. For example, *antechamber* means ‘a small room situated in front of a larger room’. In (2b), the prefix *fore-* describes the front part of a place. For example, *forecourt* means ‘a flat area in front of a large building’. In (2c), the prefix *mid-* describes the middle part of a place. For example, *midfield* means ‘the middle portion of a sports field’. In (2d), the prefix *inter-* describes interaction between places or people. For example, *inter-city* means ‘between two or more cities’. In (2e), the prefix *intra-* describes interaction within the same place or people. For example,

*intra-family* means ‘within a single family’. In (2f), the prefix *post-* describes the rear part of a place. For example, *postorbital* means ‘situated behind the eye’.

## Exercise 5.2

The prefixes below represent spatiality in terms of vertical axis. Choose the correct prefix before the root in each sentence.

super-      sub-      under-      infra-      hypo-

1. The war has badly damaged the country's -----structure.
2. Each flat in the new building has an -----ground car park.
3. The -----floor is built of solid concrete or suspended wood.
4. References to the notes are given in -----script in the book.
5. A -----dermic needle is used to inject substances into the body.

### 5.1.3 Temporality

The domain of **temporality** is background knowledge marking the sequence of events in time. It is the order in which a series of events happen or the chronology in which they are arranged, as an indication of their relative importance. Temporality includes three facets: start, middle and finish. Start is the beginning of something. It refers to an event which has existence or comes into existence before another. Middle is the median of something. It refers to an event whose occurrence is intermediate between the beginning and end of a date: day, month, season or year. Finish is the end of something. It refers to an event which occurs at the end of a stage, a period or phase in the progression or development of an event.

Morphologically, the domain of **temporality** is actualized by the prefixes *ante-*, *fore-*, *pre-*, *mid-* and *post-*. Each stands for a particular time in temporal sequence. *Ante-* means ‘prior to the time referred to by the root’. It features an event or a process that exists before another. *Fore-* means ‘occurring before the action mentioned in the root’. It emphasizes an event that happens beforehand or prematurely. *Pre-* means ‘preceding the period indicated in the root’. It stresses an event or a stage in a series of events as taking place earlier than another. *Mid-* means ‘the middle part of the period cited in the root’. It describes an event as taking place in the middle. *Post-* means ‘after the period named in the root’. It describes an entity as being later in time than another.



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Let us now assess some examples to see if the prefixes perform different functions within the domain.

- (3) a. antedate, ante-dawn  
b. forecast, forebode, foredoom  
c. pre-flight, pre-lunch, pre-crash  
d. midday, mid-afternoon, midsummer  
e. postgraduate, post-ceremony, post-match

The examples under (3) contain words formed by adding prefixes to nominal free morphemes. They yield two remarks about the prefixes. First, the prefixes signal temporality. Second, the prefixes manifest different facets. In (3a) the prefix *ante-* emphasizes the fact that one thing exists before another. For example, *antedate* means ‘existing before another by comparison’. In (3b), the prefix *fore-* stresses the fact that an activity is performed before the natural time. For example, *forecast* means ‘to say what you expect to happen in the future’. In (3c), the prefix *pre-* underlines the fact that a phase in a series of events happens before another. For example, *pre-flight* means ‘taking place before the start of a flight’. In (3d), the prefix *mid-* underscores the fact that an action occurs in the middle of another. For example, *midday* means ‘happening in the middle of the day, that is, noon’. In (3e), the prefix *post-* accentuates the fact that an event occurs after another. For example, *post-graduate* means ‘the study undertaken after completing a first degree’.

### Exercise 5.3

Complete each given root with a prefix denoting the domain of temporality, which means the same as the phrase in brackets.

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. -----date   | (prior to)     |
| 2. -----doom   | (beforehand)   |
| 3. -----lunch  | (earlier than) |
| 4. -----match  | (later than)   |
| 5. -----summer | (middle of)    |

### 5.1.4 Size

The domain of **size** is a knowledge configuration alluding to the physical magnitude of something. It refers to the measurement of something or its

proportionate dimensions. Size comprises three facets: large, medium and small. Large means big in dimension. It refers to something that is bulky, that is, greater than average of its kind. The things described include tangible as well as intangible objects. Medium means neither large nor small. It refers to something that is midway between extremes of size. The things described include physical objects. Small means less than average. It refers to something that is smaller when compared with what is typical or average. The things described include electronic or moving objects.

Morphologically, the domain of **size** is coded by the prefixes *macro-*, *maxi-*, *midi-*, *micro-* and *mini-*. Although these prefixes have to do with size, they are distinct in use. *Macro-* means 'very large of the thing denoted by the root'. It pictures something, generally chemical substances, as being very large. It relates to the whole of something, rather than its parts. *Maxi-* means 'large or long of the object denoted by the root'. It describes physical objects, broadly clothing, as being larger than a normal example of its kind. *Midi-* means 'medium of the thing denoted by the root'. It delineates physical objects, usually plastic objects, as being of medium size or length. *Micro-* means 'minute size of the thing stated in the root'. It characterizes something, principally electronic equipment, as being extremely small or of reduced size. *Mini-* means 'diminutive size of the thing denoted by the root'. It describes something, primarily objects or places, as being very small or smaller than a normal example of the same thing.

Let us now analyse some examples to prove that the prefixes occupy different positions within the domain.

- (4) a. macrostructure, macronucleus, macromolecule
- b. maxi-dress, maxi-coat, maxi-skirt
- c. midi-socket, midi-keyboard, midi-board
- d. microfiche, microchip, microfilm
- e. mini-bus, mini-coach, mini-van

The examples under (4) contain nouns formed by adding prefixes to nominal free morphemes. They lead to two conclusions. First, the prefixes designate size. Second, the prefixes designate different facets. In (4a), the prefix *macro-* attaches to scientific terms or equipment. For example, *macrostructure* means 'a structure of a material or tissue that is large enough to be seen with the naked eye'. In (4b), the prefix *maxi-* attaches to words used in fashion. For example, *maxi-dress* means 'a long dress covering the top half of the body and

hanging down over the legs’. In (4c), the prefix *midi-* attaches to words denoting objects. For example, *midi-socket* means ‘a socket that is of medium-size’. In (4d), the prefix *micro-* attaches to words that cannot be seen with the naked eye. For example, *microfiche* means ‘a small rectangular sheet of film on which information is photographed in a reduced size’. In (4e), the prefix *mini-* attaches to words denoting objects. For example, *minibus* means ‘a small bus for carrying around 10 to 15 passengers’.

Exercise 5.4

The prefixes *mega-*, *hyper-* and *super-* denote size. In the space provided, write the number of the expression and the letter of the facet with which it matches.

- |                 |                             |       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1. mega-project | a. biggest in physical size | ----- |
| 2. hyper-market | b. bigger in physical size  | ----- |
| 3. super-tanker | c. large in abstract size   | ----- |

## 5.2 Domains evoked by negative prefixes

Primarily, a negative prefix indicates a state or action that is opposed to the free morpheme to which it is attached. Secondly, it is a morpheme which is added to a semantically positive or neutral base to signal adverseness. Negative prefixes form, relative to their definitional analyses, various cognitive domains. A **domain** is a conceptual configuration which encodes knowledge about the specialized statuses of the prefixes in language. Within the domains, the prefixes occupy different facets. A **facet** is an aspect of a domain which stands for a particular concept. Domains are important in that to understand the meaning of a prefix it is necessary to understand both the domain in which it occurs and the meanings of the other participants. The meaning of a prefix is interpreted by setting it in contrast with the other participants of the domain. Below are the cognitive domains which negative prefixes evoke.

### 5.2.1 Distinction

The domain of **distinction** is a conceptual frame incorporating contrast or dissimilarity between two entities or their properties. It refers to the process of

comparing two or more entities to show differences between them. Entities that are distinct differ along contradictory versus contrary lines. A contradictory distinction arises when two opposites exist without allowing any alternative to occur in between; that is two words are contradictory if the positive and negative counterparts admit of no middle ground. For example, a person can be either male or female. This type of distinction amounts to mere description, whose aim is to give an account of what something is, nothing more. A contrary distinction arises when there is a third alternative which is similar to the two opposites but distinct from both. Two words are contrary if the positive and negative counterparts have an intermediate grade. For example, something may be neither hot nor cold; it may be warm. This type of distinction is associated with evaluation, whose aim is to judge the value, quality or importance of something.

Morphologically, candidates for the domain of **distinction** are the negative prefixes *non-*, *a-*, *dis-*, *un-* and *in-*. Even though the prefixes have to do with distinction, they are not alike in behaviour. They differ with reference to the degrees of oppositeness. *Non-* and (to a lesser degree) *a-* favour a contradictory reading. *Non-* means ‘different from the thing imparted by the root’, whereas *a-* means ‘unlike the quality of the thing referred to by the root’. *Non-* describes a choice between two non-technical features of things, whereas *a-* describes a choice between two technical features of things. In this use, *non-* and *a-* are objective in tone. By contrast, *dis-*, *un-* and *in-* favour a contrary reading. *Dis-* means ‘the converse of the quality signified by the root’. It occupies the lowest level on the scale of contrariness. It is used to evaluate attitudes of people. In this use, it is unfavourable in character. *Un-* means ‘the antithesis of what is specified by the root’. It occupies a medium level on the scale of contrariness. It is used to evaluate properties of things. In this use, it is disapproving in character. *In-* means ‘the opposite of the thing expressed by the root’. It occupies the highest level on the scale of contrariness. It is used to evaluate properties of situations. In this use, it is critical in character.

Let us now analyse some data to see if the negative prefixes behave in semantically distinct ways within the domain.

- (5) a. non-essential, non-standard, non-renewable
- b. aseptic, atonal, atypical
- c. discourteous, dishonest, disloyal
- d. unclean, untidy, unusual
- e. inappropriate, insignificant, irregular

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The examples under (5) contain adjectives formed by adding negative prefixes to adjectival free morphemes. They disclose two ramifications about the prefixes. First, the prefixes denote distinction. Second, the prefixes exemplify different facets. In (5a), the prefix *non-* selects adjectival bases of classifying nature, substantially describing non-technical features of things. For example, *non-essential* means 'not completely necessary'. In (5b), the prefix *a-* selects adjectives of classifying nature, chiefly describing technical features of things. For example, *aseptic* means 'not having harmful bacteria'. In (5c), the prefix *dis-* selects adjectival bases of qualitative nature, often describing attitudes of people. For example, *discourteous* means 'not courteous, having bad manners'. In (5d), the prefix *un-* selects adjectival bases of qualitative nature, mostly describing properties of things. For example, *unclean* means 'not clean or sterile'. In (5e), the prefix *in-* selects adjectival bases of qualitative nature, commonly describing properties of situations. For example, *inappropriate* means 'not suitable for a particular situation or occasion'.

### Exercise 5.5

Which adjective with the right negative prefix denoting the domain of distinction equals the given explanation?

1. ----- = not standard
2. ----- = not typical
3. ----- = not honest
4. ----- = not tidy
5. ----- = not significant

### 5.2.2 Opposition

The domain of **opposition** is a field of knowledge describing the act of opposing something verbally or physically. A verbal opposition relates to the mind, involving the expression in words of ideas against something. A physical opposition relates to the body, involving the use of a means to prevent something from happening, or taking the necessary steps to change it. Opposition involves three facets. These facets have semantic relationships with one another. The first facet embodies attitude, the way you think and feel about a given policy or strategy. Here, the opposition takes the form of a verbal action. The second facet relates to event, the process of doing something in order to deal with a situation. Here, the opposition takes the

form of a physical action. The third facet includes contrast, the act of comparing or putting close together two or more things to show the differences between them.

Morphologically, representatives of the domain of **opposition** are the negative prefixes *anti-*, *counter-* and *contra-*. Although these prefixes are similar in symbolizing the act of opposing, they are not identical in use. Each stands for a different facet of opposition. *Anti-* means 'reacting against the thing named by the root'. It represents the first facet, referring either to attitude, where the opposition is against opinions which spark disagreement; or to a device, where the opposition is against states that have harmful effects. *Counter-* means 'facing the action or activity designated by the root'. It represents the second facet, referring to an action or event carried out in retaliation for another action or event. The opposition is against actions or practices that are controversial. It involves attempts to change a state of affairs like acting, fighting, working, and so on. *Contra-* means 'posed against the thing mentioned in the root'. It represents the third facet, placing or setting two things in comparison for the sake of clarity. The opposition is about two things being as different as possible.

Let us now have a check on some examples to see if the negative prefixes have different uses within the domain.

- (6) a. anti-colonialism, anti-immigration, anti-slavery
- b. counter-attack, counter-strike, counter-offensive
- c. contradistinction, contraindication, contraposition

The examples under (6) contain nouns formed by adding negative prefixes to nominal free morphemes. They display two repercussions about the prefixes. First, the prefixes signify distinction. Second, the prefixes manifest different facets. In (6a), the prefix *anti-* describes attitudes of people against certain practices or themes, used largely in philosophical, political or social fields. For example, *anti-colonialism* means 'hostile to the belief in and support for the system of one country controlling another'. In (6b), the prefix *counter-* describes actions taken in opposition to other actions, used mainly in military or sporting fields. For example, *counter-attack* means 'an attack made in response to the attack of an enemy or opponent in war, sport or an argument'. In (6c), the prefix *contra-* describes the contrast between two opposing things, used basically in general contexts. For example, *contradistinction* means 'in contrast to something or somebody'.

Exercise 5.6

Identify the facets within the domain of opposition which the negative prefixes in the following morphological expressions evoke.

- 1. anti-body -----
- 2. contraindication -----
- 3. counter-measure -----
- 4. anti-immigration -----
- 5. counter-offensive -----

5.2.3 Privation

The domain of **privation** is a knowledge base capturing the relationship between two entities in which one indicates the absence of the other. It refers to the act of depriving an entity of the basic things which it normally displays, or which determine its quality. The focus is on the act of taking something away from something, preventing somebody from having something, or the state where something is lacking or has been denied. In logic, it indicates the absence of any quality which might be naturally or rationally expected. Privation has three facets. The first facet signifies action. It means damaging, disarranging or neglecting a place. The second facet denotes something concrete. It entails harming, confiscating or reducing the rights of people, especially as a punishment. The third facet expresses something abstract. It involves something important which is lacking in a particular situation.

Morphologically, manifests of the domain of **privation** are the negative prefixes *de-*, *dis-*, and *un-*. These prefixes have one thing in common. They share reference to the act of disowning. However, they are not interchangeable. Each prefix represents a certain semantic specialization of the domain. They differ with respect to the type of entity being affected in the process. *De-* means ‘depriving the thing described by the root’. It represents the semantic value of the first facet. It reflects on things or places which lack certain qualities. *Dis-* means ‘lacking the thing signified by the root’. It signifies the semantic value of the second facet. It focuses on people who are deprived of certain qualities. *Un-* means ‘bereft of what is specified by the root’. It symbolizes the semantic value of the third facet. It places emphasis on situations which suffer from the absence of certain properties.

Let us now run a check on some examples to see if the negative prefixes are associated with distinct patterns within the domain.

- (7) a. deface, decolour, deform,  
 b. dishonour, disfavour, disservice  
 c. unpeace, unhealth, unwisdom

The examples under (7) contain words formed by adding negative prefixes to nominal free morphemes, forming negative verbs in (a–b) and negative nouns in (c). They yield two consequences about the prefixes. First, the prefixes embody privation. Second, the prefixes symbolize different facets. In (7a), the prefix *de-* derives verbs describing things as suffering from the deprivation of certain properties. For example, *to deface* means ‘to spoil the appearance of something’. In (7b), the prefix *dis-* derives verbs construing people as suffering from certain qualities. For example, *to dishonour* means ‘to deprive someone of respect’. In (7c), the prefix *un-* derives nouns construing situations as suffering from certain features. For example, *unpeace* means ‘a lack of accord, peace or stability’.

### Exercise 5.7

Choose the appropriate base or root which the prefix denoting the domain of privation takes to derive a new word.

- |             |            |           |            |
|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. de-----  | a. favour  | b. face   | c. peace   |
| 2. dis----- | a. service | b. form   | c. health  |
| 3. un-----  | a. honour  | b. wisdom | c. base    |
| 4. de-----  | a. colour  | b. health | c. service |
| 5. dis----- | a. face    | b. peace  | c. favour  |

### 5.2.4 Removal

The domain of **removal** is a conceptual account involving the taking away of something, getting rid of something, or changing the position of someone. It is the act of removing or the fact of being removed. As the definition reveals, removal subsumes different facets. In each facet, a different entity is processed. The first facet involves taking something away from somewhere, or off something. The second facet involves forcing someone to leave an important place, or give up a belonging because of bad behaviour. The third facet involves freeing, relieving, or emptying a place or thing of something, usually undesirable. Relative to the nature of the entity affected, removal comprises three facets. Firstly, things or places are being affected in the act



of removing. Secondly, people are being affected in the act of removing. And thirdly, physical objects are being affected in the act of removing.

Morphologically, specifiers of the domain of **removal** are the negative prefixes *de-*, *dis-* and *un-*. In general terms, these prefixes are alike in expressing the notion of removal. They convey the core meaning of ‘remove’. They express a shift in position, change in content or the doing away with something. In specific terms, however, they are different. Each prefix symbolizes a different facet of the domain. Each has, therefore, a particular use. The distinction lies in the type of object which undergoes the process of removal. *De-* means ‘removing the thing described by the root’. It stands for the first facet, choosing places or things in the act of removal. *Dis-* means ‘ridding of the thing signified by the root’. It represents the second facet, opting for people in the act of removal. *Un-* means ‘taking away what is specified by the root’. It represents the third facet, selecting things or material in the act of removal.

Let us now peruse some examples to see if the negative prefixes really have different usages within the domain.

- (8) a. degrease, defrost, defog
- b. disarm, disrobe, displace
- c. unload, uncurl, unhitch

The examples under (8) contain verbs formed by adding negative prefixes to nominal roots. They produce two results about the prefixes. First, the prefixes embody removal. Second, the prefixes represent different facets. In (8a), the prefix *de-* derives verbs describing things regardless of whether they are abstract or concrete. For example, *to degrease* means ‘to remove grease from something’. In (8b), the prefix *dis-* derives verbs describing people. For example, *to disarm* means ‘to take weapons away from someone’. In (8c), the prefix *un-* derives verbs describing physical objects. For example, *to unload* means ‘to remove contents from a container, a load of goods from a vehicle’.

### Exercise 5.8

The phrases below are erroneous. In each, the receiver of the action denoted by the negative verb is wrongly chosen. Write the correct answer in the blank.

- 1. degrease \*a person      -----
- 2. degrease \*a place      -----

- |                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| 3. disarm *a market | ----- |
| 4. unload *a person | ----- |
| 5. unload *a room   | ----- |

## 5.2.5 Reversal

The domain of **reversal** is a semantic space encapsulating a relationship between two entities which witness a change from one state to its opposite. It encodes a change of something so that it is the opposite of what it was before. It is the act of turning in the opposite direction or position, or changing the usual order of the parts of something. It manifests itself in different ways relative to the particular area of meaning in which it is operating. Depending on the nature of the object being reversed, reversal comprises three facets. In the first, the act of reversing relates to places. In this way, it means making a place different from how it was. In the second, the act of reversing pertains to humans. In this way, it means making somebody experience the opposite effect of an action. In the third, the act of reversing applies to physical objects. In this way, it means making something return to the original position.

Morphologically, designators of the domain of **reversal** are the negative prefixes *de-*, *dis-* and *un-*. To the extent that these prefixes pertain to the domain of reversal, they are similar. They have the meaning ‘undo’ as their main semantic component. Even so, each prefix is associated with a particular facet of the domain, and has therefore a distinctive meaning. The distinction resides in the type of object which the prefix selects to affect in the process of reversing. *De-* means ‘reversing the action described by the root’. It exemplifies the first facet in which it targets places or things in the act of reversal. *Dis-* means ‘turning around the action signified by the root’. It exemplifies the second facet in which it subjects people to the act of reversal. *Un-* means ‘inverting what is specified by the root’. It exemplifies the third facet in which it exposes physical objects to the act of reversal.

Let us now carry out a check on some examples to see if the negative prefixes occur in different environments within the domain.

- (9) a. decipher, defile, deforest  
 b. disband, discredit, disinherit  
 c. unlock, unplug, unscrew

The examples under (9) contain verbs formed by adding negative prefixes to nominal roots. A closer examination of the examples identifies two outcomes

about the prefixes. First, the prefixes denote reversal. Second, the prefixes symbolize different facets. In (9a), the prefix *de-* derives verbs describing places or things. For example, *to decipher* means ‘to discover the meaning of something written badly or in a difficult or hidden way’. In (9b), the prefix *dis-* derives verbs describing people. For example, *to disband* means ‘to stop people from operating as a group’. In (9c), the prefix *un-* derives verbs describing objects. For example, *to unlock* means ‘to undo the lock of something using a key’.

Exercise 5.9

Write negative verbs denoting the domain of reversal to replace the actions in each of the following phrases.

- 1. To spoil the purity of a place = \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. To harm a person’s reputation = \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. To unfasten a thing by twisting = \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. To cut down trees in a large area = \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. To deprive someone of a privilege = \_\_\_\_\_

5.2.6 Treatment

The domain of **treatment** is a conceptual scenario encoding a way of behaving towards or dealing with a person or thing. Treatment covers two facets of behaviour, depending on whether the action taken is accidental or intentional. One facet concerns accidental treatment, where an action happens by chance. It is an incorrect, unwise or unfortunate act caused by poor judgement or lack of care. It is an action that is liable to happen as a consequence of something else. The thing affected is either a thing or an object. Accordingly, the performer of the action is not subjected to punishment if s/he does it only once. The other facet concerns intentional treatment, where an action is carefully planned or consciously done. It is an act of reflecting, planning or arranging something in advance. The thing affected involves a process that is done on purpose. Accordingly, the performer is held responsible for his or her action.

Morphologically, denominators of the domain of **treatment** are the negative prefixes *mis-* and *mal-*. Both prefixes are associated with the sense of ‘wrong’, but their applications may be distinguished. Each prefix represents a distinct aspect of the domain. Their distinctiveness becomes apparent when they are used in context. *Mis-* means ‘false performance of the thing conveyed

by the root'. It represents the accidental facet. It means handling somebody or something wrongly out of negligence. Almost all the instances stress an action that is incorrectly or unconsciously done. As evidence, one can say *mishear* but not *mislisten* because *listen* is a verb of endeavour and denotes conscious performance. By contrast, *mal-* means 'inappropriate execution of the thing denoted by the root'. It represents the intentional facet. It means handling a person or an animal intentionally cruelly or unkindly or handling a thing badly out of selfish interest. Nearly all the instances stress an action that is purposely or knowledgeably performed.

Let us now check some examples to see if the negative prefixes have different semantic preferences within the domain.

- (10) a. misconception, misinterpretation, misconstrual  
b. maladministration, malnutrition, malpractice

The examples cited in (10) contain nouns formed by adding negative prefixes to nominal roots or bases. They confirm two observations about the prefixes. First, the prefixes denote treatment. Second, the prefixes embody different facets. In (10a), the prefix *mis-* derives nouns describing mental acts. For example, *misconception* means 'the act of understanding somebody's words or actions wrongly'. In (10b), the prefix *mal-* derives nouns describing action. For example, *maladministration* means 'the act of managing something inefficiently or dishonestly'.

### Exercise 5.10

Construct negative words denoting the domain of treatment to replace the italicized words in the following sentences.

1. They often *pronounce* his name *incorrectly*. -----
2. The papers *interpret* his speech *inaccurately*. -----
3. The policeman *directed* the traffic *wrongly*. -----
4. The imported machine *functions* *improperly*. -----
5. They *treat* the animals in the zoo *cruelly*. -----

## Summary

In this chapter, I investigated the impact of the domain theory on the semantic description of prefixes. With regard to this theory, the meanings of prefixes are

described relative to the cognitive domains to which they belong. A **domain** is a context of background knowledge with regard to which the specific meanings of prefixes are identified. A domain represents a concept in which different types of relationships hold between the prefixes, which are defined in terms of their minimally-divergent semantic roles. Each prefix identifies a facet of the domain which is precisely different from the other. A **facet** is a portion of a domain which is associated with a particular concept. A facet describes a discrete human experience. The prefixes have inter-locking senses such that one cannot understand a prefix without understanding the structure of the domain in which it is embedded and the other prefixes with which it competes. The point has been to show that prefixes do not exist in isolation in the mind of the speaker, but form together structured domains. These domains establish the precise senses of the prefixes and assign them specific roles in the language. The speaker's choice of a prefix depends on conceptualizing a situation. This task is taken up in the upcoming chapter.

The tables below summarize the (sub)domains which prefixes in English evoke. Table 5.1 summarizes the (sub)domains evoked by positive prefixes, whereas Table 5.2 summarizes the (sub)domains evoked by negative prefixes ones.

**Table 5.1** The (sub)domains evoked by positive prefixes

Domains	Facets	Exponents	Meaning differences
degree	quality	<i>hyper-</i> <i>ultra-</i> <i>super-</i>	describes emotional reaction as being beyond what is tolerable describes mental reaction as being beyond what is proper describes the quality of products or materials as being extraordinary
	quantity	<i>mega-</i> <i>sur-</i>	describes events or their performers as being phenomenal describes things as being additional or extra
spatiality		<i>ante-</i> <i>fore-</i>	depicts an entity as being situated before another sketches an entity, or its first part, as being situated in front of another
		<i>mid-</i> <i>inter-</i> <i>intra-</i>	portrays an entity as being in the middle of something describes interaction between entities in different places describes interaction between entities within the same place or group
		<i>post-</i>	describes an entity as being behind something else
temporality	anterior	<i>ante-</i> <i>fore-</i> <i>pre-</i>	features an event or a process that exists before another emphasizes an event that happens beforehand or prematurely stresses an event or a stage in a series of events as taking place earlier than another
	middle	<i>mid-</i>	describes an event as taking place in the middle
	posterior	<i>post-</i>	describes an entity as being later in time than another

size	large	<i>macro-</i>	pictures something, generally chemical substances, as being very large
		<i>maxi-</i>	describes physical objects, broadly clothing, as being larger than a normal example of its kind
	medium	<i>midi-</i>	delineates physical objects, usually plastic objects, as being of medium size or length
	small	<i>micro-</i>	characterizes something, principally electronic equipment, as being extremely small or of reduced size
		<i>mini-</i>	describes something, primarily objects or places, as being very small or smaller than a normal example of the same thing

**Table 5.2** The (sub)domains evoked by negative prefixes

Domains	Facets	Exponents	Meaning differences
distinction	contradictory	<i>non-</i> <i>a(n)-</i>	describes a choice between two actions describes a choice between two features
	contrary	<i>dis-</i> <i>un-</i> <i>in-</i>	evaluates attitude of people evaluates properties of things evaluates properties of situations
	opposition	<i>anti-</i>	reacts against a practice
privation	attitude	<i>counter-</i>	responds to an action
	action	<i>contra-</i>	compares one thing to another
	comparison		
removal	places/things	<i>de-</i>	deprives a place or thing of something
	people	<i>dis-</i>	causes someone to lack something
	objects	<i>un-</i>	bereaves an object of something
reversal	places/things	<i>de-</i>	removes something from a place or thing
	people	<i>dis-</i>	rids someone of something
	objects	<i>un-</i>	takes away an object from something
treatment	places/things	<i>de-</i>	reverses a place or thing to its original nature
	people	<i>dis-</i>	turns around the position of someone
	objects	<i>un-</i>	inverts the direction of an object
treatment	accidental	<i>mis-</i>	treats an entity unconsciously
	intentional	<i>mal-</i>	treats an entity purposely

# Prefixal Construals

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Chapter 6 appraises the impact of construal on the interpretation of word pairs beginning with rival prefixes. Starting from the cognitive assumption that there is no absolute synonymy in language, it is argued that word pairs preceded by prefixes are not alike in meaning even if they are morphologically related. The contrast is clarified by the particular construal which the speaker imposes on the common root. The purpose of the chapter is to show that it is the prefix which encodes the intended construal of the speaker. The chapter consists of two sections. Section 6.1 addresses the semantic distinctions symbolized by positive prefixes. Section 6.2 discusses the semantic distinctions symbolized by negative prefixes. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I investigate the nuances of meaning. Second, I pinpoint the prefixes signalling them. Third, I give examples to illustrate the distinctive uses of the pair members.

## 6.1 Distinctions symbolized by positive prefixes

Prefixes belonging to any domain can attach to the same root and form a word pair. The choice between the pair members is not only a question of content, but also a matter of construal. **Construal** is the cognitive ability to conceptualize a situation in different ways and choose the appropriate prefixes to represent them in discourse. One dimension of construal which is at the disposal of the speaker is **perspective**, the viewpoint which the speaker takes of a situation. The content supplied by the root of a word has more than one meaning. The members of a word pair relate to the different meanings of the root from which they are derived. In each case, the speaker imposes a different perspective on the content, and so chooses a different prefix. The difference is a matter of the alternative ways in which the root is viewed, which is morphologically realized by different prefixes. Each word, consisting of the root plus the prefix, has, thus, a meaning of its own. Below are details of the semantic distinctions and the rival prefixes which represent them.

### 6.1.1 Excessive vs. extreme

The prefixes *hyper-*, *ultra-* and *super-* form adjectival trebles from common adjectival roots. They evoke the domain of **degree**, but they represent different facets of it. The prefixes *hyper-* and *ultra-* describe quality as being excessive, exceeding what is reasonable or tolerable. The prefix *hyper-* means 'having too much of the quality signalled by the root'. It shows that the quality stated is immoderate. The prefix *ultra-* means 'lying beyond the feature given in the root'. It shows that the quality stated is inordinate. Both have negative connotations. The prefix *super-* describes quality as being extreme, exceeding what is usual or proper. It means 'exceeding the norms or limits of the feature mentioned in the root'. It describes the feature as being more than normal. It has positive connotations. A consideration of the data bears out the differences in their application. *Hyper-* applies to people or their reactions to certain stimuli. *Ultra-* applies to procedures of carrying out particular tasks. *Super-* applies to equipment or their advantages. A typical indication of this distinction is offered by the adjectival examples below:

- (1) hypersensitive vs. ultrasensitive vs. supersensitive
  - a. She's *hypersensitive* to any form of criticism.
  - b. They use an *ultra-sensitive* technique to measure residual disease.
  - c. They manufacture *supersensitive* musical instruments.

The adjectives in (1) are derived from the adjectival base *sensitive*, meaning 'easily annoyed by the things people say or do'. Despite this, construal draws a line of demarcation between them. In (1a), the adjective *hypersensitive* means 'excessively sensitive'. A *hypersensitive person* is a person who reacts very badly to rude remarks or specific substances. The semantic preferences associated with *hypersensitive* are words denoting emotions such as *criticism*, *insult*, *offence*, *stress*, *unease*; chemical substances such as *agent*, *caffeine*, *drug*, *medication*, *therapy*; aspects of things such as *colour*, *light*, *noise*, *smell*, *sound*, and so on. In (1b), the adjective *ultrasensitive* means 'abnormally sensitive'. An *ultrasensitive object* is an object that is beyond what is proper or moderate. The semantic preferences associated with *ultrasensitive* are words implying procedures such as *assay*, *device*, *mechanism*, *system*, *technique*, and so on. In (1c), the adjective *supersensitive* means 'extremely sensitive'. A *supersensitive detector* is a detector that is overly sensitive in performing its duties. The semantic preferences associated with *supersensitive* are words naming devices such as *detector*, *instrument*, *receptor*, *scanner*, *tool*, and so on.



## Exercise 6.1

Fill in the blanks by choosing the alternative which matches the construal implied by each of the following sentences.

1. superfast vs. ultra-fast

The car is ----- . Its speed is extremely high.

The car is ----- . Its speed exceeds the norm.

2. super-confident vs. ultra-confident

The captain is ----- . He is confident to an undue degree.

The captain is ----- . He is confident to an intense degree.

### 6.1.2 Quality vs. quantity

The prefixes *super-* and *mega-* form nominal pairs from common nominal roots. They elicit the domain of **degree**, but they underline distinguishable aspects of it. The prefix *super-* marks quality, the distinctive attribute or characteristic of an entity. It means 'being greater in power than the thing mentioned in the root'. In describing individuals from a performance perspective, it means extraordinary, that is, someone is extremely remarkable, unusual or prominent in a profession. The prefix *mega-* marks quantity, the property of an entity that is measurable in number, amount, size or weight. It means 'surpassing the example given in the root'. In describing individuals from an economic perspective, it means phenomenal, that is, someone is extremely successful, superior or unequalled in his/her field. An investigation of the data confirms the differences in their focus. *Super-* focuses on class or calibre, whereas *mega-* focuses on amount or volume. A pertinent illumination of this distinction is afforded by the nominal pair below:

- (2) superstar vs. megastar

a. He spoke about the pressures of being a *superstar*.

b. The *megastar* is earning bucket loads of money.

The two nouns in (2) are derived from the nominal root *star*, meaning 'an outstanding person or thing'. Both refer to an extremely famous person in the fields of film, music, sports, and so on. In spite of sharing the same root and having the same reference, construal draws a line of separation between them and ascribes them to different contexts. In (2a), the noun *superstar* means 'a well-known personality'. A *superstar* is an extremely famous performer.

The contextual preferences of *superstar* are words denoting quality such as *achievement*, *performance*, *pressure*, *style*, *success*, and so on. In (2b), the noun *megastar* means ‘a well-known celebrity’. A *megastar* is a very famous entertainer. The contextual preferences of *megastar* are words denoting quantity such as *cash*, *money*, *revenues*, *stakes*, *wealth*, and so on.

## Exercise 6.2

The pair members below illustrate the notion of degree, but they differ in construal. Show how each member is used.

1. super-rich -----  
-----
2. mega-rich -----  
-----

### 6.1.3 Within vs. between

The prefixes *intra-* and *inter-* attach to same nominal roots to form adjectival pairs. They actuate the domain of **spatiality**, but they emphasize different angles of it. The prefix *intra-* characterizes an entity as being within or inside the same group of people, places or objects. It means ‘within the entity stated in the root’. The prefix *inter-* characterizes an entity as being between separates groups of people, places or objects. It means ‘between the entities stated in the root’. A look at the data validates the differences in their signification. *Intra-* signifies interaction taking place inside the same group of people or location. *Inter-* signifies interaction taking place between different groups of people or different locations. A perfect reflection of this distinction is provided by the adjectival pair below:

- (3) *intra-state* vs. *interstate*
  - a. The chaos represents the outcome of *intra-state* conflicts.
  - b. They emphasized the need to improve *interstate* exports.

The two adjectives in (3) are derived from the nominal root *state*, meaning ‘a country or nation with its own government’. Yet, construal marks a difference between them in usage. In (3a), the noun *intra-state* means ‘occurring within a single state’. *Intra-state conflicts* are conflicts that emerge within the boundaries of a single state. *Intra-state* is preferable in the context of politics such as

*clashes, conflicts, disputes, relationships, services*, and so on. In (3b), the noun *interstate* means ‘occurring between two or more states’. *Interstate exports* are exports that take place between many states. *Interstate* is preferable in the context of commerce such as *export, highways, trade, transfer, transport*; politics such as *conferences, negotiations, relations, rivalries, wars*, and so on.

### Exercise 6.3

Before each root, decide which prefix, *intra-* or *inter-*, conforms to the construal implied by the sentence.

1. The agreement on -----national trade has been signed by most nations.
2. The government seeks to resolve all -----national conflicts peacefully.
3. All the news bulletins concentrate on the -----party power struggles.
4. After the election, they called for the resumption of -----party talks.
5. Much work still needs to be done to improve -----agency linkages.
6. The TV reports highlight the importance of -----agency rankings.

### 6.1.4 Prior vs. precedent

The prefixes *ante-* and *pre-* are appended to same verbal roots to form verbal pairs. They stimulate the domain of **temporality**, but they focus on different parts of it. The prefix *ante-* delineates an entity being prior to something else or existing before something else. It means ‘prior to the time referred to by the root’. The prefix *pre-* delineates an entity as being precedent for something else or happening before something else. It means ‘preceding the period indicated in the root’. A review of the data corroborates the differences in their descriptions. *Ante-* describes something as existing before something else. It sets two things or dates in comparison. *Pre-* describes an event as occurring at an earlier point in time. It emphasizes the sequence of related events, that is, the order in which one event precedes another. A clear illustration of this distinction is given by the verbal pair below:

- (4) antedate vs. predate
  - a. The Peruvian empire *antedates* the Mexican empire.
  - b. The study *predates* the economic recession of the 1980s.

The two verbs in (4) are derived from the verbal root *date*, meaning ‘to say how long something has existed or when it was made’. Still, construal causes a difference between them in usage. In (4a), *to antedate* means ‘to exist earlier in

time'. *To antedate* means one empire existed further back in time than another. *Antedate* co-occurs with words denoting things such as *check*, *document*, *empire*, *letter*, *palace*, and so on. In (4b), *to predate* means 'to occur earlier in time'. *To predate* means the study happened before the date mentioned. *Predate* co-occurs with words denoting action such as *ascendancy*, *discovery*, *invention*, *recession*, *transition*, and so on.

## Exercise 6.4

The pair members below share a common root, but they are by no means identical. For each member, give an interpretation which results from the use of the attached prefix.

1. ante-natal care -----  
-----
2. pre-natal care -----  
-----

## 6.1.5 Vast vs. huge

The prefixes *hyper-* and *super-* are annexed to common nominal roots to build nominal pairs. They vitalize the domain of **size**, but they underscore different components of it. The prefix *hyper-* pictures something as being vast or immense. It suggests size that exceeds ordinary bounds. It means 'vastly bigger than the thing signalled by the root'. The prefix *super-* pictures something as being huge or bulky. It suggests size that is greater than average of its kind. It means 'hugely bigger in size than the thing signalled by the root'. On a scale, *hyper-* is clearly one step higher than *super-*. A browse through the data supports the differences in their uses. *Hyper-* is used to describe objects that are vast in size. *Super-* is used to describe objects that are huge in size. A vivid demonstration of this distinction is supplied by the nominal pair below:

- (5) hypermarket vs. supermarket
  - a. There is a new *hypermarket* on the outskirts of the town.
  - b. The new apartments have a *supermarket* on the premises.

The two nouns in (5) are derived from the nominal root *market*, meaning 'a building or open space where a market is regularly held'. Nevertheless, construal exposes a difference between them in use. In (5a), the noun

*hypermarket* means ‘a very large self-service store’. A *hypermarket* is a very large commercial establishment that is a combination of a department store and a supermarket. *Hypermarket* prefers to collocate with such phrases as *a short distance from the town of*, *in a commercial zone outside the city*, *on a 7-hectare plot*, *on a 9-acre site*, *on the outskirts of*, and so on. In (5b), *supermarket* means ‘a large self-service store’. A *supermarket* is a large retail store selling food and household goods. *Supermarket* prefers to collocate with such phrases as *in a major shopping precinct*, *on a busy street*, *on the premises*, *opposite the hospital*, *right in the city centre*, and so on.

Exercise 6.5

The following pair members are used to describe the same situation, but they are not equivalent in meaning. Using construal, show the difference in meaning between them.

- 1. megastore -----  
-----
- 2. superstore -----  
-----

6.2 Distinctions symbolized by negative prefixes

Prefixes belonging to any domain can attach to the same base and form a word pair. The choice between the members of a pair is not only a question of conceptual content, but also of the way the speaker construes it. **Construal** refers to the way in which a speaker perceives a situation, interprets its meaning and codes it in language. One dimension of construal is **perspective**, referring to the viewpoint imposed on a scene which changes relative to the speaker’s intention or the requirement of the discourse. The root has a conceptual content, which includes more than one meaning. Each derived member of the word pair represents a different experience of the speaker, who frames its morphological form by means of a distinct prefix. Each prefix, therefore, highlights a different aspect of the meaning of the root. The derived word has its own distinct meaning, which is contributed partly by the attached prefix. Below are details of the semantic distinctions within the domain of *aspect* and the rival suffixes that represent them.

## 6.2.1 Descriptive vs. evaluative

On common adjectival bases, the prefixes *non-*, *a-*, *dis-*, *un-* and *in-* derive negative pairs of adjectives. They spark the domain of **distinction**, but they represent diverse elements of it. The prefixes *non-* and *a-* are descriptive, giving an account of what someone or something is like. *Non-* means ‘different from the quality described by the root’. *A-* means ‘divergent from the quality referred to by the root’. They are distinctly impartial in tone, and so trigger an objective description. In this function, the words they derive acquire contradictory readings. By contrast, the prefixes *dis-*, *un-* and *in-* are evaluative, judging what someone or something is. *Dis-* means ‘the converse of the quality signified by the root’. *Un-* means ‘the antithesis of what is specified by the root’. *In-* means ‘the opposite of the property expressed by the root’. They are partial in flavour, and so produce a subjective evaluation. In this function, the words they derive acquire contrary readings. *Dis-* represents the lowest degree of contrariety. It is unfavourable in character. In the middle is *un-*, which is disapproving in character. At the highest degree of contrariety is *in-*, which is critical in character. The negative adjectival pair below provides a pertinent example:

- (6) non-professional vs. unprofessional  
 a. The company provides training for *the non-professional* staff.  
 b. She was found guilty of *unprofessional* conduct by the court.

The two negative adjectives in (6) are derived from the adjectival base *professional*, meaning ‘relating to a profession, or conforming to its standards’. Each adjective, however, represents a particular construal and so has a different use in the language. In (6a), the adjective *non-professional* means ‘not trained in a specific profession’. *Non-professional staff* are staff who are not professionals. *Non-professional* collocates with words referring to personnel such as *actors*, *drivers*, *helpers*, *staff*, *workers*, and so on. In (6b), the adjective *unprofessional* means ‘below or contrary to the standards expected in a particular profession’. *Unprofessional conduct* means conduct that does not reach the standard expected in a particular profession. *Unprofessional* collocates with words referring to demeanour such as *behaviour*, *conduct*, *deportment*, *manner*, *practice*, and so on. Of the two adjectives, the one preceded by *un-* has a negative connotation. *Non-professional staff* can still be competent in their field, whereas *unprofessional staff* are not.

### Exercise 6.6

Use the correct negative prefixes *a-*, *dis-*, *non-*, *un-* and *in-* before the base given in brackets to suit the construal indicated by the sentence.

1. (social)      The research covers the ----- areas of linguistics.  
The man was rejected for being solitary and -----.
2. (moral)      He is -----, paranoid and devoid of convictions.  
He condemned the government's action as -----.
3. (typical)     There is a need to develop childcare at ----- times.  
Burglary, for example, is an ----- female crime.
4. (essential)   A proportion of their income is spent on ----- goods.  
Some work part-time because their earnings are -----.
5. (obedient)   The treaty cannot be put at risk by ----- countries.  
The children remain self-centred, selfish and -----.

## 6.2.2 Unfavourable vs. disapproving

On common adjectival bases, the prefixes *dis-* and *un-* derive negative pairs of adjectives. They elicit the domain of **distinction**, but they exemplify discrete points of it. The prefix *dis-* describes an entity as being unfavourable, which means opposed to one's interests. It means 'the converse of the quality signified by the root'. It shows distinction in medial degree, that is, situated in or towards the middle on the scale of contrast. It draws attention to only the necessary information in the contrast. The prefix *un-* describes an entity as being disapproving, which means unwilling to accept, engage in or agree to something. It means 'the antithesis of what is specified by the root'. It shows distinction above medial degree, that is, situated between the middle and the top on the scale of contrast. It sheds light on some of the information in the contrast. A research of the data shows that words negated by the prefixes co-occur with different collocations. Words beginning with *dis-* collocate mostly with nouns referring to people or their acts, whereas words beginning with *un-* collocate mostly with nouns referring to people or things. The negative adjectival pair below offers a splendid example:

- (7) disinterested vs. uninterested
  - a. They need the help of some *disinterested* observers.
  - b. They are completely *uninterested* in such questions.

The two negative adjectives in (7) are derived from the adjectival base *interested*, meaning ‘wanting to give one’s attention to something and discover more about it’. Each adjective, nonetheless, manifests a different construal, and so has a different role to play in the language. In (7a), the adjective *disinterested* means ‘impartial’. A *disinterested observer* is an observer who is free from bias or self-interest. *Disinterested* collocates with words referring to people such as *assessor, observer, investigator, participator, researcher*, or their acts such as *argument, judgement, research, scholarship, speculation*, and so on. In (7b), the adjective *uninterested* means ‘indifferent’. *Uninterested people* are people who show no interest in something or take no heed of it. *Uninterested* collocates with words referring to people such as *child, lady, mother, public, student*, or things such as *conversation, game, idea, problem, question*, and so on. Of the two adjectives, only *disinterested* can co-occur with positive words, as in *He is disinterested and honourable in his public life*.

### Exercise 6.7

Write the missing negative prefixes, *dis-* or *un-*, before the roots to fit the construal conveyed by the sentences.

1. His unpopularity is causing -----quiet among supporters.
2. We hope that his -----quiet spirit will find peace in the grave.
3. He -----associated himself from the remarks about the boss.
4. The sudden disease is -----associated with current infection.
5. The system was -----established and replaced by monarchy.
6. He proposed to promote young and -----established writers.

### 6.2.3 Concrete vs. abstract

From common adjectival bases, the prefixes *un-* and *in-* form negative pairs of adjectives. They exemplify the domain of **distinction**, but they activate different instances of it. The prefix *un-* sketches something as being concrete. It means ‘the antithesis of what is specified by the root’. It underlies contrast that lies above the middle point on the scale. It concentrates on less detail in highlighting the contrast. It carries the message that the action profiled is in a state that is possible but difficult to do. The prefix *in-* sketches something as being abstract. It means ‘the opposite of the property expressed by the root’. It underscores contrast that lies at the end of the scale. It shows distinction to an



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extreme degree, and draws on fuller detail in highlighting the contrast. It conveys the message that the action profiled is in a state that is impossible to do. A survey of the data illustrates that words negated by the prefixes take different collocations. Words beginning with *un-* tend to take nouns denoting tangible objects. By contrast, words beginning with *in-* tend to take nouns denoting intangible objects. The negative adjectival pair below affords a fine example:

- (8) unrepairable vs. irreparable  
a. The bed was so badly broken that it was *unrepairable*.  
b. The students did *irreparable* damage to the computers.

The two negative adjectives in (8) are derived from the adjectival base *repairable*, meaning ‘able to be repaired’. Each adjective, nevertheless, epitomizes a different construal, and so has a different application in the language. In (8a), the adjective *unrepairable* means ‘impossible to repair’. An *unrepairable bed* is a bed that is in so bad a physical condition that it cannot be mended. *Unrepairable* collocates with words denoting objects such as *bed*, *camera*, *clock*, *table*, *watch*, and so on. In (8b), the adjective *irreparable* means ‘impossible to repair’. *Irreparable damage* is damage that is not likely to be reverted. *Irreparable* collocates with words denoting harm such as *blow*, *damage*, *harm*, *injury*, *loss*, and so on. For this reason, only *irreparable* is possible in contexts like, *Her death is an irreparable loss*. In such contexts, it is impossible to rectify, repair or restore the state of affairs designated by the base, and that is exactly the core meaning of the prefix *in-*.

### Exercise 6.8

Each of the following sentences accepts one member of the italicized pair. Underline the one which accords with the construal implied.

1. The consequences of a nuclear war are *unmeasurable/immeasurable*.  
The film had an *unmeasurable/immeasurable* impact on the viewers.
2. The child could no longer live on *unsubstantial/insubstantial* food.  
They presented *unsubstantial/insubstantial* evidence to the court.
3. The monuments were so heavy they were *unmoveable/immovable*.  
She knit her brows as a signal of *unmovable/immovable* stubbornness.
4. The students still found him very odd and *unpractical/impractical*.  
They described the road pricing plan as *unpractical/impractical*.
5. They adopted an *unartistic/inartistic* approach to the current problem.  
Amplification is not necessarily an *unartistic/inartistic* phenomenon.

### 6.2.4 Ideology vs. deed

The prefixes *anti-* and *counter-* build nominal pairs on common nominal bases. They act as rivals within the domain of **opposition**. Even so, they are not identical for they fulfil separate functions in the language. The prefix *anti-* has to do with ideology, the basic beliefs or guiding principles of a person or group. It means ‘reacting against the thing named by the root’. It refers to an ideology which is adopted to respond to another. The prefix *counter-* has to do with deed, the process of doing something, especially dealing with a problem or difficulty. It means ‘facing the action or activity designated by the root’. It refers to an action that takes place in response to another. In essence, *anti-* suggests a diplomatic and less confrontational line than *counter-*. An examination of the data shows that words negated by the prefixes host different collocations. Collocations of words negated by *anti-* refer to ordinances or statutes. By contrast, collocations of words negated by *counter-* refer to people and their workplaces. The negative nominal pair below makes a prime example:

- (9) anti-terrorism vs. counter-terrorism  
 a. Those arrested under *anti-terrorism* laws were eventually released.  
 b. The crowd watched the movements of the *counter-terrorism* team.

The two negative nouns in (9) are derived from the nominal base *terrorism*, meaning ‘the use of violence by a group or an organization for political purposes’. Even so, each noun symbolizes a certain construal and so has a different function in the language. In (9a), the noun *anti-terrorism* refers to the attitude or ideology which opposes terrorism. *Anti-terrorism laws* are laws that are designed to fight terrorism. *Anti-terrorism* collocates with words referring to laws and legislation. In (9b), the noun *counter-terrorism* refers to the practices or tactics which oppose terrorism. *A counter-terrorism team* is a team that is specialized in fighting terrorism. *Counter-terrorism* collocates with words referring to people such as *experts, forces, specialists, teams, units*, or the places where they work such as *inspectorates, intelligence agencies, police headquarters, security services*, and so on. As evidence, only *counter-* is modified by adverbs denoting action which is due to the nature of the verbal base it combines with, as in *The police swiftly counter-acted to tackle the problem*.

#### Exercise 6.9

After each verb collocation listed below, write the negative word, *anti-revolution* or *counter-revolution*, which co-occurs with it.

- 1. start -----
- 2. wage -----
- 3. voice -----
- 4. reflect -----
- 5. express -----

6.2.5 Action vs. state

The prefixes *dis-* and *un-* build nominal pairs on common nominal roots. They act as opponents within the domain of **privation**. Nonetheless, each prefix has a distinct role to play in the language. The prefix *dis-* concerns action, the process of doing something for a particular purpose. It means ‘lacking the thing signified by the root’. It picks out the action that is implied by the root. The prefix *un-* concerns state, the condition of being that exists at a particular time. It means ‘bereft of what is specified by the root’. It picks out the state that is implied by the root. In essence, *dis-* is less powerful than *un-* in expressing negation. An analysis of the data shows that words negated by the prefixes pattern with different collocations. Words prefixed by *dis-* tend to collocate with expressions of disapproval of statements, or of surprise at events. By contrast, words prefixed by *un-* tend to collocate with expressions of lack of faith in a system or of scepticism of a doctrine. The negative nominal pair below supplies a typical example:

- (10) disbelief vs. unbelief
  - a. They listened in *disbelief* to the extraordinary story.
  - b. The essence of *unbelief* lies in departing from God.

The two negative nouns in (10) are derived from the nominal root *belief*, meaning ‘the feeling of certainty that something exists or is true’. In spite of that, each noun represents a different construal, and so has a special task to perform in the language. In (10a), the noun *disbelief* means ‘lack of belief’. Here, *disbelief* implies refusal to accept that an account or a story is true or real. *Disbelief* collocates with expressions denoting surprise or shock such as *ask/breathe/gasp/hoot/listen/stare/watch in . . . ; give a snort of . . . , give way to . . . , shake the head in . . . , wear a look of . . . ,* and so on. In (10b), the noun *unbelief* means ‘lack of faith’. Here, *unbelief* implies reluctance to believe that a faith or a religion is true. *Unbelief* collocates with expressions denoting attitude or principle such as *fill the heart up with . . . , manifest a strong/weak . . . in, reveal the . . . in,* and so on. Evidence for this interpretation is provided

by the fact that in a context where religion is in focus only the use of *unbelief* is permissible.

### Exercise 6.10

Below are members of a pair differing in the choice of negative prefixes. For each one, comment on the meaning and give an example to justify its use.

1. disburden

Meaning: -----

Example: -----

2. unburden

Meaning: -----

Example: -----

## 6.2.6 Disengagement vs. disconnection

The prefixes *de-* and *un-* are used to make verbal pairs on common verbal roots. They act as contestants within the domain of **removal**. Nevertheless, they are distinctive in use. The prefix *de-* focuses on disengagement, making two things become separate from each other. It means ‘separating the thing described by the root’. It focuses on the extrication of two physically unattached objects. The prefix *un-* focuses on disconnection means unfastening two things. It means ‘taking away what is specified by the root’. It focuses on the separation of two physically attached objects. A look at the data shows that words negated by the prefixes collocate differently. Words with *de-* prefer noun collocates which refer prototypically to objects and exceptionally to humans. Words with *un-* prefer noun collocates which refer to objects. The negative verbal pair below gives a perfect example:

(11) decouple vs. uncouple

a. The revenues had been *decoupled* from the sales.

b. The carriages had been *uncoupled* from the train.

The two negative verbs in (11) are derived from the verbal root *couple*, meaning ‘to connect or combine two things’. Despite that, each verb signifies a particular construal that earmarks its use in the language. In (11a), the verb *to decouple* means ‘to disengage one thing from another’. *To decouple* two things is to end the relationship between them. *Decouple* collocates with words referring to disjoined objects such as *age from size*, *earnings from revenues*,

*policy from ideology, revenues from sales, software from hardware, and so on. In (11b), the verb to uncouple means ‘to disconnect one thing from another’. To uncouple two things is to separate two things that are joined together, by undoing a fastening that connects them. Uncouple collocates with words referring to joined objects such as carriage from train, hook from chain, ring from lock, sleeve from tube, trailer from tractor, and so on. As evidence, one can say decouple foreign policy from ideology, but one cannot say uncouple foreign policy from ideology.*

Exercise 6.11

The following members of a pair share a common root, but they are not interpreted in the same way. Demonstrate dissimilarities both in the meaning the members display and in the collocations they take.

1. defrock  
Meaning: -----  
Collocation: -----
2. unrock  
Meaning: -----  
Collocation: -----

6.2.7 Exclusion vs. disentanglement

The prefixes *de-* and *un-* make pairs of verbs from common verbal roots. They act as adversaries within the domain of **reversal**. Despite having the same root, construal assigns them discrete purposes. The prefix *de-* serves to highlight exclusion, prohibiting someone or something from taking part in an activity or from entering a place. It means ‘reversing the action described by the root’. It applies to people by shutting them out or excluding them from a place or condition. The prefix *un-* serves to highlight disentanglement, inverting things that are joined. It means ‘inverting what is specified by the root’. It applies to objects by opening or unlocking them. A study of the data shows that words negated by the prefixes have different collocations. Words negated by *de-* collocate with nouns referring to humans. Words negated by *un-* collocate with nouns referring to objects. The negative verbal pair below provides a supreme example:

- (12) debar vs. unbar
- a. They were *debarred* from the club for unacceptable behaviour.
- b. After hours of trying, they finally managed to *unbar* the door.

The two negative verbs in (12) are derived from the verbal root *bar*, meaning ‘to prevent someone from doing something or fasten something with a bar’. Despite that, each verb differs in construal, and so has its own sense in the language. In (12a), the verb *to debar* means ‘to keep somebody from entering or taking part in something’. *To debar* people is to prohibit them officially from doing something by law or official agreement. *Debar* collocates with words referring to people such as *citizens, employees, seamen, students, travellers*, and so on. It is to be noted that in *debar* the prefix functions as an intensifier. In (12b), the verb *to unbar* means ‘to unlock or open a door or gate’. *To unbar* a door is to open it by withdrawing a bolt. *Unbar* collocates with words referring to things such as *device, door, gate, handset, phone*, and so on. As evidence, in a context like *preventing someone from voting in the elections*, only the verb *to debar* can replace *prevent*.

### Exercise 6.12

The root *value* allows the negative prefixes *de-* and *dis-*. Define each formation and provide evidence that it is different.

1. devalue

Definition: -----

Evidence: -----

2. disvalue

Definition: -----

Evidence: -----

### 6.2.8 Accidental vs. intentional

The prefixes *mis-* and *mal-* make pairs of nouns from common nominal bases. They act as competitors within the domain of **treatment** are *mis-* and *mal-*. However, they differ in task depending on the construal of the root. The prefix *mis-* depicts something as being accidental, happening by chance. It means ‘falsely performing the action conveyed by the root’. It sheds light on the negligent nature of the action conveyed by the base. The prefix *mal-* depicts something as being intentional, being done on purpose. It means ‘inappropriately executing the action denoted by the root’. It sheds light on the purposive nature of the action conveyed by the base. Whereas the prefix *mis-* causes psychological damage, the prefix *mal-* causes physical damage. A look at the data shows that words negated by the prefixes host different

collocations. Words hosting the prefix *mis-* are often found with noun collocates that often refer to objects and only sometimes to humans or pets. By contrast, words hosting the prefix *mal-* are often found with noun collocates that refer to humans. The negative nominal pair below offers a good example:

- (13)    misadjustment vs. maladjustment
- a. *Misadjustment* of the winder will affect the watch performance.
- b. Deprivation at home can lead to *maladjustment* in the children.

The two negative nouns in (13) are derived from the nominal base *adjustment*, meaning ‘the act of changing slightly so as to achieve a desired result’. In spite of this, each noun receives a specific construal, and so has a special mission to carry out in the language. In (13a), the noun *misadjustment* means ‘false adjustment’. *Misadjustment* is used when something does not fit or fits badly, when one adjusts the winder of a watch badly so that it shows the wrong time. *Misadjustment* collocates with words referring to devices such as *button*, *clock*, *knob*, *switch*, *winder*, and so on. In (13b), the noun *maladjustment* means ‘inappropriate adjustment’. *Maladjustment* is used when people are unable to adapt properly to their environment, leading often to problems in behaviour. *Maladjustment* collocates with words referring to humans such as *adolescents*, *children*, *individuals*, *persons*, *teenagers*; modifiers such as *marital*, *physical*, *psychological*, *sexual*, *social*, and so on. As can be seen, *misadjustment* is used in technical contexts and denotes errors, whereas *maladjustment* is used in social contexts and denotes gaffes.

Exercise 6.13

Build new words on the basis of the information given, using the negative prefixes *mal-* and *mis-* which represent different construals.

- |                    |   |        |   |       |
|--------------------|---|--------|---|-------|
| 1. falsely         | + | treat  | = | _____ |
| 2. inappropriately | + | treat  | = | _____ |
| 3. mistakenly      | + | formed | = | _____ |
| 4. abnormally      | + | formed | = | _____ |

Summary

In this chapter, I verified the construal theory in the semantic description of pairs of words beginning with prefixes. Relative to this theory, pairs of words

sharing the same bases and hosting different prefixes are not considered synonymous even if they are morphologically related. The non-synonymy is a function of **construal**, a way the speaker conceives and expresses a situation. Given such a view, it becomes clear that even if pairs of words have common bases, they display semantic differences due to the construal the speaker imposes on them. The meaning of a composite word cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the role of the speaker in shaping it. The role of the speaker resides in **perspective**, the viewpoint which the speaker takes of a situation. There are two keys to using a pair correctly. One key is to know that the two words constitute different conceptualizations of the same situation. The different conceptualizations reflect different perspectives of the speaker. The other key is to know that, as a result, the two words are realized morphologically differently. In each morphological realization, it is the prefix that encodes the intended conceptualization. Each word has, thus, a meaning of its own. Each word has a special mission to carry out in language. Evidence in support of the differences comes from **collocation**, the tendency of words to occur together in a text.

Table 6.1 summarizes the semantic distinctions and their representative prefixes.

Table 6.1 The semantic distinctions signalled by prefixes

Construals			
Positive prefixes		Negative prefixes	
Distinctions	Representatives	Distinctions	Representatives
excessive vs. extreme	<i>hyper-/ultra-</i> vs. <i>super-</i>	descriptive vs. evaluative	<i>non-/a-</i> vs. <i>dis-/un-/in-</i>
quality vs. quantity	<i>super-</i> vs. <i>mega-</i>	unfavourable vs. disapproving	<i>dis-</i> vs. <i>un-</i>
within vs. between	<i>intra-</i> vs. <i>inter-</i>	concrete vs. abstract	<i>un-</i> vs. <i>in-</i>
prior vs. precedent	<i>ante-</i> vs. <i>pre-</i>	ideology vs. deed	<i>anti-</i> vs. <i>counter-</i>
vast vs. huge	<i>hyper-</i> vs. <i>super-</i>	action vs. state	<i>dis-</i> vs. <i>un-</i>
		disengagement vs. disconnection	<i>de-</i> vs. <i>un-</i>
		exclusion vs. disentanglement	<i>de-</i> vs. <i>un-</i>
		accidental vs. intentional	<i>mis-</i> vs. <i>mal-</i>





# Part III

## Suffixation

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Part III is about the morphology of suffixes in English. A **suffix** is a bound morpheme that is added to the end of a free morpheme to form a new composite word, of either a similar or different word class. The free morpheme is a root or a base which can be a noun, an adjective or a verb. As an active mode within word formation, **suffixation** is the process of deriving a new word by attaching a suffix to the end of a root or base. Some suffixes are productive, others are less so. Some suffixes are native. Others come from Latin, often through French or Greek. Regardless of productivity or etymology, Part III gives comprehensive coverage of suffixes. It includes three chapters. Chapter 7 explores the sense multiplicity of the suffixes. Chapter 8 investigates the configuration of the suffixes. Chapter 9 examines the contribution of the suffixes in differentiating between word pairs which share common roots.

The integration of a root and a suffix to form a composite structure is ruled by four valence factors. First, the two substructures share certain elements at both semantic and phonological levels. Phonologically, the suffix *-ise* attaches to the root *human* to yield *humanise*. Semantically, the suffix *-ise* denotes causation which corresponds to the quality denoted by *human*. Second, the two substructures qualify as dependent and autonomous. The suffix *-ise* qualifies as dependent. It cannot stand by itself as an independent unit. To complete its meaning, it needs a root like *human*, which qualifies as autonomous, to form *humanise*. Third, the two substructures function as profile determinant and complement. The suffix *-ise* functions as profile determinant. It changes the word class of the derived formation. *Human* is a noun but *humanise* is a verb. It adds a special meaning to the derived formation. *Humanise* means ‘make somebody or something human’. Fourth, the two substructures display meaningful levels of constituency. In a composite word like *dehumanise*, at the first level, the suffix *-ise* integrates with the root *human* to form the verb *humanise*. At the second level, *humanise* combines with the prefix *de-* to form the negative verb *dehumanise*.

The interpretation of the composite structure made up of a root and suffix undergoes a two-way semantic analysis. In some cases, the meaning of the

composite structure is determined by the meanings of its substructures, in which the suffix plays a decisive role. For example, the meaning of the word *humanise* is a combination of the meanings of the root and the suffix: 'make somebody or something human'. In other cases, the meaning of the composite structure includes not only the semantic contributions of its substructures, but also the pragmatic knowledge behind what is actually symbolized. The suffix adds important substance to the root, but the composite structure requires encyclopaedic knowledge in its interpretation. For example, the meaning of the word *questionable* in *a questionable theory* is not only a function of the meanings of the root and the suffix: 'a theory that can be questioned', but rather 'a theory that is dubious'. Presumably, every theory can be questioned.

# Suffixal Categories

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Chapter 7 explores the role of categorization in the semantic description of English suffixes as single lexemes. Drawing on the cognitive assumption that linguistic items have multiple meanings, it is argued that a suffix forms a network of senses subsumed under a **schema**, a pattern which represents an outline of a suffix. The senses, also called elaborations or instantiations, enrich the outline with full details. One sense is termed the **prototype**, which is the salient example. The remaining senses are termed the **periphery**, which are defined by their resemblance to the prototype, and so arranged in terms of distance from it. The senses emerge as a result of the interaction between the meaning of the suffix and that of the root. The aim of the chapter is to offer exact definitions for a given suffix. The chapter includes three sections. Section 7.1 pertains to noun-forming suffixes. Section 7.2 relates to adjective-forming suffixes. Section 7.3 deals with verb-forming suffixes. In all the sections, I pursue three steps. First, I establish the prototypical sense of a suffix. Second, I disclose its peripheral senses. Third, I provide examples to explicate its senses.

## 7.1 Noun-forming suffixes

A noun-forming suffix, also called a **nominal suffix** or a **nominalizer**, is a bound morpheme which is added to the end of a free morpheme to form a noun. The free morpheme can be a verb, an adjective or a noun. For example, *-ure* is a bound morpheme that is dependent on the free morpheme *erase* to form the noun *erasure*, which means ‘the act of erasing something’.

### 7.1.1 Verbal roots

When the root is a verb, the nouns formed can be either simple or agent. Simple nouns are formed by suffixes such as *-al*, *-ce*, *-ion* and *-ment*. The suffixes *-al* and *-ce* form nouns from verbal roots only peripherally. They are discussed later in the chapter. Agent nouns are formed by suffixes such as *-ant*, *-ee* and *-er*. The suffix *-ant* forms nouns from verbal roots only peripherally. It is discussed later in the chapter. Below is the semantic network of each suffix.

## 1. Simple nouns

## ◎ [-ION]

The frequent use of the suffix *-ion*, which also takes the forms *-ation*, *-sion* and *-xion*, indicates action in a process. It conveys the sense ‘the act of doing the process referred to in the root’. This sense surfaces when the verbal roots display different dimensions of transitivity. For example, *construction* is the act of making something. Other derivations are (tr) *completion*, *inspection*, *narration*, *production*, *restoration*; (tr and intr) *celebration*, *decision*, *explanation*, *protection*, *reduction*; (intr) *eruption*, *option*, and so on.

The infrequent use of the suffix *-ion* indicates result in a process. It conveys the sense ‘the result of the process referred to by the root’. This sense surfaces when the verbal roots apply to different types of animacy. For example, *expulsion* is the result when one is forced to leave somewhere. Other derivatives are (human) *abdication*, *emigration*, *hesitation*, *immigration*, *obligation*; (human and non-human) *citation*, *demotion*, *deviation*, *modulation*, *separation*; (non-human) *annexation*, *destruction*, *extension*, *regulation*, *stagnation*, and so on.

## ◎ [-MENT]

In prototypical cases, the suffix *-ment* illustrates result in a process. It has two semantic niceties. (a) ‘the result of the process referred to by the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive and affect different entities in terms of animacy. For example, *retirement* is the result when one leaves a job and stops working because of retirement age or ill health. Similar nouns are (human) *accomplishment*, *commitment*, *enrolment*, *punishment*, *resentment*; (human and non-human) *assignment*, *deployment*, *employment*, *involvement*, *replacement*; (non-human) *assessment*, *embezzlement*, *improvement*, *investment*, *payment*, and so on. (b) ‘the state referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are transitive and denote emotion. For example, *amazement* is the state of being amazed. Similar nouns are *appeasement*, *astonishment*, *bereavement*, *enjoyment*, *enlightenment*, and so on.

In peripheral cases, the suffix *-ment* illustrates other notions. It has three senses. (a) ‘the act of doing the process referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *enrichment* is the act of improving the quality of something by adding something else.

Similar nouns are (tr) *bombardment*, *concealment*, *enhancement*, *imprisonment*, *management*; (tr and intr) *adjournment*, *commencement*, *disappointment*, *rearmament*, and so on. (b) ‘the means, instrument or agent referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *attachment* is an extra part or extension attached to something. Similar nouns are *advertisement*, *equipment*, *impediment*, *refreshment*, *reinforcement*, and so on. (c) ‘the location referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a settlement* is a place where people establish a community. Similar nouns are *embankment*, *emplacement*, *encampment*, and so on.

### Exercise 7.1

Here are some uses of the suffix *-ment*. Establish the prototype and arrange the other senses in terms of distance from it.

concealment, equipment, punishment, encampment, enjoyment

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. ----- | 4. ----- |
| 2. ----- | 5. ----- |
| 3. ----- |          |

2. Agent nouns

#### ◎ [-EE]

In its prototypical function, the suffix *-ee* is an illuminator of patientivity. It has three semantic specifications. (a) ‘a person who is affected by the action named by the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are monotransitive. For example, *an employee* is a person who is employed by another. Examples denoting volitional participants are *adoptee*, *divorcee*, *examinee*, *interviewee*, *trainee*, and so on. Examples denoting non-volitional participants are *biographee*, *detainee*, *draftee*, *internee*, and so on. (b) ‘a person to whom something is transferred by the action named by the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are ditransitive. For example, *a payee* is a person to whom money is paid. Other examples are *awardee*, *assignee*, *grantee*, *releasee*, *sendee*, and so on. (c) ‘a person who is granted the thing named by the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a patentee* is a person who is granted a patent. Other examples are *franchisee*, *mortgagee*, *trustee*, and so on.

In its peripheral function, the suffix *-ee* is an illuminator of agenthood. It has three semantic specifications. (a) 'a person who has performed the action named by the root'. This sense arises when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *an attendee* is a person who attends a meeting. Other examples include *arrivee*, *recoveree*, *retiree*, *returnee*, and so on. (b) 'a person who is associated with the thing named by the root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a townee* is a person who lives in a town. (c) 'a thing that is diminutive of the thing named by the nominal root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a coatee* is a short close-fitting coat.

◎ [-ER]

Prototypically, the suffix *-er*, which also takes the variants *-or* and *-ar*, is an indicator of human agenthood. It exhibits six senses. (a) 'a person who performs the action labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a farmer* is a person who operates a farm. Other examples are *advisor*, *beggar*, *director*, *teacher*, *writer*, and so on. (b) 'a person who does the activity labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, *a dreamer* is a person who dreams habitually. Other examples are *actor*, *hiker*, *jumper*, *runner*, *talker*, and so on. (c) 'a person who makes the object labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a hatter* is a person who makes hats. Other examples are *furrier*, *millier*, *sealer*, *slater*, *tinner*, and so on. (d) 'a person who studies the thing labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *an astrologer* is a person who studies astrology, the movements of stars and planets. Other examples are *astronomer*, *geographer*, *lawyer*, *philosopher*, and so on. (e) 'a person who is from the place labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a Londoner* is a person who is from London. Other examples are *Berliner*, *New Yorker*, *northerner*, *villager*, and so on. (f) 'a person who has the attribute labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a nutter* is a person who is mad or eccentric. Other examples are *corker*, *miser*, and so on.

Peripherally, the suffix *-er* is an indicator of non-human agenthood. It exhibits four senses. (a) 'an animal which performs the action labelled in the root'. This sense appears when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *a pointer* is a dog trained to stand still with its nose pointing towards the prey that is being hunted. Other examples are *retriever*, *trotter*, and so on.

(b) ‘a thing that is set to perform the action labelled in the root’. This sense appears when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a freezer* is a refrigerator for preserving food at a very low temperature. Other examples are *calculator, eraser, generator, lighter, toaster*, and so on. (c) ‘a thing that does the thing labelled in the root’. This sense appears when the verbal roots are (in) transitive. For example, *a beeper* is a device which emits a series of beeps to let its owner know that he or she is being paged. Examples of material objects are *buzzer, pager, timer*, and so on. Examples of immaterial objects are *clincher, reminder, thriller*, and so on. (d) ‘a place which is used for the thing labelled in the root’. This sense appears when the verbal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, *a diner* is a dining car on a train. Other examples are *kneeler, sleeper*, and so on.

## Exercise 7.2

Use the suffixes *-ee* and *-er* to form agent nouns which stand for the following definitions.

1. A person who answers the questions during an interview. -----
2. A small device used for providing a flame for a cigarette. -----
3. A bench, board, cushion or stool for people to rest on. -----
4. A person who is given the authority to manage property. -----
5. A person who goes on an extended walk for pleasure. -----

## 7.1.2 Adjectival roots

A cluster of suffixes is added to adjectival roots to make nouns. The cluster includes such suffixes as *-ce*, *-cy*, *-ity* and *-ness*. Below is the semantic network of each suffix.

### ◎ [-CE]

On the prototypical level, the suffix *-ce* which is added to adjectives, originally ending in *-ant* or *-ent*, is expressive of characterization. It has three semantic variances. (a) ‘the state indicated by the root’. This sense emerges when the adjectival roots are qualitative. For example, *brilliance* is the state of being brilliant. Other examples are *absence, diligence, negligence, significance, violence*, and so on. (b) ‘the amount indicated by the root’. This sense emerges when the adjectival roots are quantitative and form abstract nouns. For example, *abundance* is a very large quantity. Other examples are *affluence, exuberance*,



*luxuriance*, and so on. (c) 'the thing indicated by the root'. This sense emerges when the adjectival roots are quantitative and form concrete nouns. For example, *a protuberance* is something that sticks out from a surface.

On the peripheral level, the suffix *-ce* is expressive of result in a process. It means 'the result of the process indicated by the root'. This sense emerges when the verbal roots display different dimensions of transitivity. For example, *defiance* is the act of resistance against authority. Other examples are (tr) *observance*, *preference*, *transcendence*, *transference*; (tr and intr) *assistance*, *defence*, *indulgence*, *insurance*, *resistance*; (intr) *appearance*, *compliance*, *divergence*, *emergence*, *insistence*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-CY]

In the prototypical pattern, the suffix *-cy*, which is added to adjectives originally ending in *-ant* or *-ent*, is representative of characterization. It has three semantic functions. (a) 'the state indicated by the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form abstract nouns. For example, *fluency* is the state of being fluent. Other examples are (human) *complacency*, *hesitancy*; (non-human) *frequency*, *poignancy*, *potency*, and so on. (b) 'an example of the state indicated by the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form concrete nouns. For example, *a dependency* is a country that is politically controlled by another. (c) 'the period of time indicated by the root'. This sense appears when the adjectival roots are classifying. For example, *infancy* is the period of early childhood, and *pregnancy* is the period of being pregnant.

In the peripheral pattern, the suffix *-cy* is representative of action. It has two semantic functions. (a) 'the act of doing the process indicated by the root'. This sense appears when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *advocacy* is the act of advocating, pleading for or publicly supporting an idea. Other examples are *prophecy*, *residency*, and so on. (b) 'the practice, rank, job or office indicated by the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, *accountancy* is the practice of being an accountant. Other examples are *captaincy*, *consultancy*, *presidency*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-ITY]

The prototypical sector of the suffix *-ity* is indicative of characterization. It includes two semantic nuances. (a) 'the quality or property designated by

the root'. This sense arises when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form abstract nouns. For example, *agility* is the quality of being agile. Other examples include (human) *civility*, *creativity*, *generosity*, *humanity*, *paternity*; (non-human) *diversity*, *elasticity*, *intensity*, *legality*, *simplicity*, and so on. (b) 'the mode of dealing with the situation designated by the root'. This sense arises when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form abstract nouns. For example, *brutality* is the mode of being brutal, and *bellicosity* is the mode of being bellicose.

The peripheral sector of the suffix *-ity*, which is added to adjectival roots to form nouns, is indicative of characterization. It includes the nuance 'the entity described by the root'. This sense arises when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form concrete nouns. For example, *an oddity* is a person or thing that is unusual. Other examples include *majority*, *minority*, *rarity*, *reality*, and so on.

### ◎ [-NESS]

The prototype of the suffix *-ness* is illustrative of characterization. It has two semantic variances. (a) 'the trait denoted by the root'. This sense surfaces when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form non-countable nouns applying to humans. For example, *awareness* is the trait of being aware. Other examples are *calmness*, *callousness*, *sadness*, *nervousness*, *selfishness*, and so on. (b) 'the property denoted by the root'. This sense surfaces when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form non-countable nouns applying to non-humans. For example, *emptiness* is the property of being empty. Other examples are *awkwardness*, *brightness*, *darkness*, *quietness*, *toughness*, and so on.

The periphery of the suffix *-ness* is illustrative of characterization. It has two semantic variances. (a) 'the characteristic denoted by the root' exists. This sense surfaces when the adjectival roots are classifying and form non-countable nouns applying to humans. For example, *blindness* is the inability to see. Other examples are *dumbness*, *deafness*, and so on. (b) 'an instance or example of the quality denoted by the root'. This sense surfaces when the adjectival roots are qualitative and form countable nouns applying to humans. For example, *an illness* is a disease of the body or mind. Other examples are *kindness*, *sickness*, and so on.

## Exercise 7.3

Identify the meanings associated with the uses of the suffixes in the following examples.

1. diligence	-----	6. rarity	-----
2. hesitancy	-----	7. kindness	-----
3. prophecy	-----	8. creativity	-----
4. presidency	-----	9. sensitivity	-----
5. transference	-----	10. brightness	-----

7.1.3 Nominal roots

Nouns formed from nominal roots can be either simple or agent. Simple nouns are formed by suffixes such as *-age*, *-dom*, *-hood*, *-ism*, *-(e)ry* and *-ship*. Agent nouns are formed by suffixes such as *-(i)an*, *-ist* and *-ster*. Below is the semantic network of each suffix.

1. Simple nouns

◉ [-AGE]

The prototypical zone of the suffix *-age* displays collectivity. It has four semantic patterns. (a) ‘a collection of things indicated by the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *baggage* is a collection of bags that travellers take on a journey. Additional examples include *flowerage*, *herbage*, *leafage*, *plumage*, and so on. (b) ‘a total of the measurement indicated by the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *mileage* is the total of the distance that a vehicle has travelled. Additional examples include *dosage*, *percentage*, *tonnage*, *voltage*, *yardage*, and so on. (c) ‘the cost of the things indicated by the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *postage* is the charge for mailing something. Additional examples include *corkage*, *dockage*, *poundage*, *storage*, *towage*, and so on. (d) ‘a place for the things indicated by the root’. This sense materializes when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *an orphanage* is a home for children whose parents are no longer living. Additional examples include *anchorage*, *harbourage*, *hermitage*, *parsonage*, *vicarage*, and so on.

The peripheral zone of the suffix *-age* displays process. It has three semantic patterns. (a) ‘the action indicated by the root’. This sense materializes when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *blockage* is the action of blocking something from moving. Other examples are *carriage*, *coverage*, and so on. (b) ‘the result indicated by the root’. This sense materializes when the verbal

roots are intransitive. For example, *shrinkage* is the result of becoming less or smaller, and *slippage* is the result of being reduced in quality, performance or production. (c) 'the action or the result indicated by the root'. This sense materializes when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *breakage* is the act or result of breaking. Other examples are *drainage*, *leakage*, *stoppage*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-DOM]

Most evident in the semantic description of the suffix *-dom* is the sense of abstractness. It means 'the state of being specified by the root'. This sense realizes when the adjectival roots are qualitative. In some derived nouns, the suffix conveys the idea of high standards. For example, *freedom* is the state of being free and *wisdom* is the state of being wise. The same sense is true when the roots are nominal, as in *martyrdom*, *stardom*, and so on. In other derived nouns, the suffix conveys a tinge of depreciation or mockery. For example, *boredom* is the state of being bored. The same sense is true when the roots are nominal, as in *thralldom*, *whoredom*, and so on.

Less evident in the semantic description of the suffix *-dom* is the sense of concreteness. It has two semantic variants. (a) 'the territory ruled by the person specified by the root'. This sense realizes when the nominal roots are concrete and the nouns formed apply to inanimate entities. For example, *a dukedom* is the region or territory controlled by a duke. Other examples are *earldom*, *kingdom*, *princedom*, and so on. (b) 'a group of people united by the thing specified by the root'. This sense realizes when the nominal roots are concrete and the nouns formed apply to animate entities. For example, *fandom* is a group of people who support a particular sport or famous person. Other examples are *filmdom*, *moviedom*, *officialdom*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-HOOD]

In the prototypical pattern of the suffix *-hood*, three senses can be identified. (a) 'the condition of being what is referred to by the root'. This sense succeeds when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, *maidenhood* is the condition of being unmarried or a virgin. More examples include, *knighthood*, *manhood*, *statehood*, *widowhood*, and so on. (b) 'the idea shared by a union of the thing referred to by the root'. This sense succeeds when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, *brotherhood* is a union that includes men

who are united for a common purpose. Other examples are *neighbourhood*, *priesthood*, *sisterhood*, and so on. (c) ‘the stage of life referred to by the root’. This sense succeeds when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, *childhood* is the stage of life when one is a child. Other examples are *adulthood*, *babyhood*, *boyhood*, *fatherhood*, *girlhood*, and so on.

In the peripheral pattern of the suffix *-hood*, the sense which can be identified is ‘an instance of the quality referred to by the root’. This sense succeeds when the adjectival roots are qualitative. For example, *falsehood* is an instance of a lie or untruth, and *hardihood* is an instance of boldness, bravery and resolution.

Exercise 7.4

Write the correct noun formed by means of the suffixes *-age*, *-dom* and *-hood* in the space provided.

- |           |       |           |       |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1. leaf   | ----- | 6. star   | ----- |
| 2. dose   | ----- | 7. boy    | ----- |
| 3. store  | ----- | 8. film   | ----- |
| 4. drain  | ----- | 9. baby   | ----- |
| 5. prince | ----- | 10. hardy | ----- |

© [-ISM]

The prototypical aspect of the suffix *-ism* denotes representation. It features five senses. (a) ‘the belief embodied in the thing named by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *conservatism* is the belief that advocates the preservation of the best in society and opposes radical changes. Further examples are *defeatism*, *feminism* *liberalism*, and so on. (b) ‘the practice based on the thing named by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *vandalism* is the practice of destroying the property of others. Further examples are *extremism*, *hooliganism*, *patriotism*, and so on. (c) ‘the philosophy descended from the person named by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are proper nouns. For example, *Calvinism* derives from John Calvin’s philosophy, which maintains that salvation comes through faith in God. Further examples are *Machiavellism*, *Marxism*, *Platonism*, and so on. (d) ‘the prejudice based on the thing named by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, *ageism* is a form of discrimination against

individuals or groups because of their age. Further examples are *nationism*, *racism*, *sexism*, and so on. (e) ‘the act named by the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *plagiarism* is the act of presenting other people’s ideas as one’s own. Further examples include *baptism*, *criticism*, *exorcism*, and so on.

The peripheral aspect of the suffix *-ism* denotes characterization. It features two senses. (a) ‘the linguistic usage featured by the thing named by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival roots are qualitative and the nouns formed apply to non-humans. For example, *a witticism* is a remark that is clever and humorous. Further examples include *colloquialism*, *truism*, *vulgarism*, and so on. (b) ‘the quality of being which is named by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival roots are qualitative and the nouns formed apply to humans. For example, *modernism* is the quality of being modern. Further examples include *humanism*, *idealism*, *realism*, and so on.

#### ◉ [-SHIP]

In prototypical elaborations, the suffix *-ship* gets four senses, which emerge when the nominal roots are concrete. (a) ‘the fact of being what is signalled by the root’. For example, *friendship* is the fact of being someone’s friend. Additional examples are *acquaintanceship*, *citizenship*, *companionship*, *ownership*, *partnership*, and so on. (b) ‘the position of being what is signalled by the root’. For example, *editorship* is the position of being an editor of a publication. Additional examples are *authorship*, *chancellorship*, *directorship*, *lectureship*, *tutorship*, and so on. (c) ‘the policy of doing the thing signalled by the root’. For example, *dictatorship* is the policy of ruling a country with absolute power or despotic control, and *censorship* is the policy of examining and controlling media content. (d) ‘the period of time spent on the thing signalled by the root’. For example, *apprenticeship* is the period of time when one works as an apprentice. Additional examples are *courtship*, *internship*, and so on.

In peripheral elaborations, the suffix *-ship* gets two senses, which emerge when the nominal roots are concrete. (a) ‘an allowance of the thing signalled by the root’. For example, *a fellowship* is an amount of money granted for advanced study or research. Additional examples are *scholarship*, *sponsorship*, and so on. (b) ‘a group of people signalled by the root’. For example, *kinship* is a group of people, usually of the same family, who are related by blood. Additional examples are *membership*, *readership*, and so on.

⊙ [-(E)RY]

Principally, the suffix *-ery*, or its contracted form *-ry*, stands for collectivity. It has three semantic specifications. (a) ‘a set of things expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the nominal roots are common nouns of things. For example, *jewellery* is a set of decorative objects made of precious metals. Similar examples are *chandlery*, *cutlery*, *machinery*, *stationery*, *weaponry*, and so on. (b) ‘a body of people expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the nominal roots are common nouns of people. For example, *peasantry* is a body of peasants. Similar examples are *ancestry*, *citizenry*, *merchantry*, *tenantry*, *yeomanry*, and so on. (c) ‘the place connected with the thing expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the nominal roots are common nouns. Some places pertain to objects. For example, a *perfumery* is a place where perfumes are made and/or sold. Similar examples are *brewery*, *eatery*, *refinery*, *winery*. Other places pertain to plants such as *grapery*, *grocery*, people such as *nunnery*, *nursery*, and animals such as *fishery*, *piggery*, and so on.

Marginally, the suffix *-ery* stands for abstraction. It has two semantic specifications. (a) ‘the attitude that shows the thing expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the adjectival roots are qualitative. For example, *bravery* is the attitude that shows courage. More examples are *foolery*, *knavery*, *prudery*, *snobbery*, *treachery*, and so on. In some cases, the root is a noun. For example, *trickery* is the use of a trick to cheat or deceive people. Similar examples are *drudgery*, *thuggery*, and so on. (b) ‘the practice of doing the thing expressed by the root’. This sense follows when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *cooking* is the practice of cooking food. Similar examples are *bribery*, *forgery*, *joinery*, *jugglery*, *robbery*, and so on.

Exercise 7.5

Write the nouns formed by adding the suffixes *-ism*, *-ship* and *-(e)ry* to the following roots.

- |             |       |             |       |
|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. age      | ----- | 6. intern   | ----- |
| 2. tutor    | ----- | 7. refine   | ----- |
| 3. vulgar   | ----- | 8. owner    | ----- |
| 4. patriot  | ----- | 9. station  | ----- |
| 5. exorcise | ----- | 10. sponsor | ----- |

## 2. Agent nouns

### ◎ [-(I)AN]

The prototypical instantiation of the suffix *-ian* expresses relationship. It has three semantic variances. (a) ‘a person who is from the place referred to in the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are proper names of places. For example, *an American* is a person who is from the USA. Other examples are *Arabian*, *Cuban*, *Persian*, and so on. (b) ‘a person who is connected with the thing referred to in the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are proper names of people. For example, *an Elizabethan* is a person who is connected with the Elizabethan age. Other examples are *Chaucerian*, *Darwinian*, *Edwardian*, *Georgian*, *Shakespearean*, and so on. (c) ‘a member of the group referred to in the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are common names of animals. For example, *a mammalian* is a member of the group of mammals, and *a reptilian* is a member of the group of reptiles.

The peripheral instantiation of the suffix *-(i)an* expresses agenthood. It has two semantic variances. (a) ‘a person whose job involves the thing referred to in the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are abstract, implying physical action. For example, *an electrician* is a person who installs or repairs electrical devices. Other examples are *magician*, *musician*, *optician*, *physician*, *tactician*, and so on. (b) ‘a person who is devoted to the knowledge field referred to in the root’. This sense happens when the nominal roots are abstract, implying verbal action. For example, *a mathematician* is a person who is skilled in mathematics, an expert in or student of mathematics. Other examples are *dietician*, *logician*, *phonetician*, *politician*, *rhetorician*, and so on.

### ◎ [-IST]

In major formations, the suffix *-ist* depicts agenthood. It has four semantic variants. (a) ‘a person who is versed in the knowledge field indicated by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract, naming fields of science. For example, *an anthropologist* is a person who is versed in anthropology. Other examples are *economist*, *pathologist*, *pharmacist*, *physiologist*, *psychologist*, and so on. (b) ‘a person who holds the belief indicated by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract, naming beliefs. For example, *a nationalist* is a person who advocates national independence for his or her country. Other examples are *defeatist*, *extremist*, *idealist*, *reformist*,



*socialist*, and so on. (c) ‘a person who handles the thing indicated by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *a novelist* is a person who writes novels. Other examples are *columnist*, *dentist*, *dramatist*, *florist*, *motorist*, and so on. (d) ‘a person who plays the instrument indicated by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are concrete, naming musical instruments. For example, *a cellist* is a person who plays the cello. Other examples are *cymbalist*, *guitarist*, *harpist*, *pianist*, *trombonist*, *violinist*, and so on.

In minor formations, the suffix *-ist* has the sense ‘being prejudiced against the thing indicated by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract, implying verbal action. For example, *an ageist* is a person who is prejudiced against people on the grounds of age. Other examples are *racist*, *sexist*, and so on. The nouns so formed have a cognate in *-ism*.

◎ [-STER]

In prototypical usages, the suffix *-ster* symbolizes agenthood. It has three semantic nuances, which proceed when the nominal roots are abstract. (a) ‘a person who performs the habitual action signified by the root’. For example, *a fraudster* is a person who gets money by deceiving people, especially in a business transaction. Other examples include *gamester*, *huckster*, *trickster*, and so on. (b) ‘a person who is skilled in the thing signified by the root’. For example, *a pollster* is a person who is skilled in conducting a public survey of facts or opinions. Other examples are *dabster*, *dopester*, *tipster*, and so on. (c) ‘a person who writes the thing signified by the root’. For example, *a punster* is a person who writes puns. Other examples are *rhymester*, *songster*, and so on.

In peripheral usages, the suffix *-ster* expresses the sense ‘a vehicle that is signified by the root’. This sense proceeds when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a roadster* is an open-top car with two seats. Other examples are *dragster*, *sportster*, and so on. Some agent nouns denote both the vehicle and the user. For example, a *speedster* is a fast driver or vehicle.

Exercise 7.6

On the lines provided, write two different meanings and examples for each of the agent suffixes below.

1. -(i)an
- 
-

- |          |       |       |
|----------|-------|-------|
| 2. -ist  | ----- | ----- |
|          | ----- | ----- |
| 3. -ster | ----- | ----- |
|          | ----- | ----- |

## 7.2 Adjective-forming suffixes

An adjective-forming suffix, also called an **adjectival suffix** or an **adjectivizer**, is a bound morpheme which is added to the end of a free morpheme to form an adjective. The free morpheme can be a noun, an adjective or a verb. For example, *-ure* is a bound morpheme that is dependent on the free morpheme *erase* to form the noun *erasure*, referring to the act of erasing something.

### 7.2.1 Verbal roots

Suffixes added to verbal roots to form adjectives are *-able*, *-ant*, *-ed*, *-en*, *-ible*, *-ing*, *-ive* and *-ory*. The suffix *-en* can only peripherally derive adjectives from verbs. It is discussed later in the chapter. Below is the semantic network of each suffix.

#### ◉ [-ABLE]

The prototypical substance of the suffix *-able* connotes patientivity. It can be paraphrased in three ways. (a) 'capable of undergoing the action referred to in the root'. This sense emerges when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a washable shirt* is a shirt that is capable of being washed. Other adjectives are *avoidable*, *breakable*, *recognisable*, *returnable*, and so on. The passive interpretation of the suffix does not always work. In some formations, it is the substance trait of the inanimate entity that is focused. *A readable book* does not mean that the book is able to be read, but a book that is enjoyable. Presumably, all books can be read. In other formations, it is the character trait of the animate entity that is focused. For example, *an adorable child* does not necessarily mean a child who can be adored, but a child who is extremely charming. (b) 'capable of doing or undergoing the action referred to in the root'. This sense emerges when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *adaptable* means either 'capable of adapting' or 'capable of being adapted'. Other adjectives are *changeable*, *variable*, and so on. (c) 'worthy of or deserving

the quality referred to in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots apply to inanimate entities. For example, a *habitable area* is an area that is suitable for living in. Other adjectives are *creditable*, *impracticable*, *marketable*, *palatable*, *saleable*, and so on.

The peripheral substance of the suffix *-able* connotes agenthood. It can be paraphrased in two ways. (a) 'capable of doing the action referred to in the root'. This sense emerges when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, *perishable food* is food that decays quickly. Other adjectives are *decayable*, *shrinkable*, and so on. (b) 'having or showing the quality referred to in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots apply to animate entities. For example, a *knowledgeable debater* is a debater who possesses and shows knowledge. Other adjectives are *charitable*, *peaceable*, *personable*, *reasonable*, and so on.

#### © [-ANT]

As to the prototypical content, the suffix *-ant*, and its variant *-ent*, form adjectives expressing agenthood. It has three semantic patterns. (a) 'liable to do the action signalled by the root'. This sense proceeds when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, a *defiant protester* is a protester who defies authority. Other examples are *attendant*, *continuant*, *ignorant*, *resistant* and so on. (b) 'apt to do the action signalled by the root'. This sense proceeds when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, a *compliant child* is a child who is apt to comply. Other examples are *errant*, *hesitant*, *resultant*, *triumphant*, and so on. (c) 'reflecting the nature of the thing signalled by the root'. This sense proceeds when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, a *dominant issue* is an issue that exercises influence and command over all others. Other examples are *radiant*, *vibrant*, and so on.

As to the peripheral content, the suffix *-ant* forms agent nouns expressing agenthood. It has two semantic patterns. (a) 'a person who performs the specific action signalled by the root'. This sense proceeds when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, an *applicant* is a person who applies for assistance, employment or admission. Examples ending in *-ant* are *assistant*, *attendant*, *dependant*, *informant*, *inhabitant*, and so on. Examples ending in *-ent* are *correspondent*, *president*, *resident*, and so on. (b) 'a substance which performs the specific action signalled by the root'. This sense proceeds when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, a *pollutant* is a substance that pollutes the air, soil or water. Examples ending in *-ant* are *coolant*, *disinfectant*,

*lubricant, relaxant, retardant*, and so on. Examples ending in *-ent* are *repellent, solvent*, and so on.

◉ [-ED]

The prototypical manifestation of the suffix *-ed* signifies patientivity. It conveys two senses. (a) ‘affected by the action referred to in the root’. This sense surfaces when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a frightened child* is a child who has been made afraid. Other adjectives which fall under this heading are *astonished, excited, interested, worried*, and so on. (b) ‘having been in the state signified by the root’. This sense surfaces when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, *a retired officer* is an officer who has retired. Other adjectives which fall under this heading are *escaped, qualified, wilted*, and so on.

The peripheral manifestation of the suffix *-ed* signifies characterization. It conveys two senses. (a) ‘demonstrating the feature signified by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *a bearded man* is a man with a beard. Other adjectives which fall under this heading are *flowered, patterned, pointed, spotted, striped*, and so on. (b) ‘implying the feature signified by the root’. This sense surfaces when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *a cultured woman* is a woman who is refined in taste and manner. Other adjectives which fall under this heading are *crooked, fabled, jaundiced, lettered, principled*, and so on.

◉ [-IBLE]

Chiefly, the essence of the suffix *-ible* denotes patientivity. It has three semantic functions. (a) ‘capable of undergoing the action referred to in the root’. This sense follows when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *a comprehensible idea* is an idea that is capable of being understood. A sample of similar adjectives includes *admissible, discernible, reducible, reversible*, and so on. (b) ‘capable of doing or undergoing the action referred to in the root’. This sense follows when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *flexible* means ‘capable of adapting to new requirements’ or ‘capable of being flexed’. A sample of similar adjectives includes *responsible, submersible*, and so on. (c) ‘involving the quality referred to in the root’. This sense follows when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed apply to inanimate entities. For example, *forcible entry* is entry that involves the use of force. A sample of similar adjectives includes *horrible, terrible*, and so on.

Peripherally, the essence of the suffix *-ible* denotes agenthood. It has two semantic functions. (a) ‘capable of doing the action referred to in the root’. This sense follows when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, *a collapsible chair* is a chair that is made to fold together. A sample of similar adjectives includes *contractible*, *combustible*, and so on. (b) ‘having or showing the quality referred to in the root’. This sense follows when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed apply to (in)animate entities. For example, *a sensible person* is a person who shows sound judgement, and *a sensible approach* is an approach that is based on practical ideas.

Exercise 7.7

In the examples suffixed by *-able*, the passive interpretation does not work. Use encyclopaedic knowledge to account for their meanings.

- 1. breathable air -----
- 2. eatable bread -----
- 3. drinkable water -----
- 4. agreeable fellow -----
- 5. deplorable behaviour -----

⊙ [-ING]

The prime sense of the suffix *-ing* is an illustration of activity. It means ‘keep on the activity signified by the root’. This meaning surfaces when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, *a recurring crisis* is a crisis which keeps on recurring. Adjectives of similar behaviour are *diminishing*, *dwindling*, *increasing*, *prevailing*, and so on.

The peripheral sense of the suffix *-ing* is an illustration of causation. It means ‘causing the action referred to in the root’. This meaning surfaces when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, *an interesting programme* is a programme that makes a viewer or listener feel interested. Adjectives of similar behaviour are *amazing*, *amusing*, *depressing*, *disgusting*, and so on.

⊙ [-IVE]

The prototypical description of the suffix *-ive* exemplifies agenthood. It has three semantic variants. (a) ‘performing or tending to perform the action referred to in the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are transitive.

For example, a *creative designer* is a designer who invents or produces something original or imaginative. A list of other adjectives includes *coercive*, *destructive*, *productive*, *repulsive*, and so on. **(b)** ‘apt to do the action signified by the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, a *speculative conclusion* is a conclusion that is apt to speculate. A list of other adjectives includes *reactive*, *responsive*, *talkative*, and so on. **(c)** ‘performing or apt to perform the action referred to in the root’. This sense arises when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, *protective clothing* is clothing that gives protection. A list of other adjectives includes *attentive*, *impressive*, *obtrusive*, *reflective*, *selective*, and so on.

The peripheral description of the suffix *-ive* exemplifies quality. It means ‘marked by the quality named by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, a *combative mood* is a mood that is marked by eagerness to fight or contend. A list of other adjectives includes *defective*, *expensive*, *impulsive*, *reflexive*, *secretive*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-ORY]

Largely, the semantic structure of the suffix *-ory* symbolizes agenthood. It has three semantic variants. **(a)** ‘performing or tending to perform the action referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are transitive. For example, an *accusatory look* is a look which accuses someone of having done something wrong. More adjectives are *congratulatory*, *deprecatory*, *intimidatory*, *obligatory*, and so on. **(b)** ‘apt to do the action referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are intransitive. For example, a *retaliatory measure* is a measure that is apt to retaliate. More adjectives are *hallucinatory*, *migratory*, and so on. **(c)** ‘performing or apt to perform the action referred to in the root’. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, an *advisory board* is a board that gives advice. More adjectives are *amendatory*, *celebratory*, *explanatory*, *preparatory*, *contributory*, and so on.

Peripherally, the semantic structure of the suffix *-ory* incorporates two senses. **(a)** ‘associated with the thing described by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed are used in specialized contexts. For example, a *respiratory disease* is a disease that is associated with the respiratory system. More adjectives are *auditory*, *statutory*, *sensory*, *transitory*, and so on. **(b)** ‘containing the quality described by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives

formed are used in general contexts. For example, a *consolatory remark* is a remark that contains comfort and sympathy. More adjectives are *declamatory*, *exclamatory*, and so on.

Exercise 7.8

How would you describe the semantic effects of the suffixes in the following set of adjectives?

- 1. destructive -----
- 2. responsive -----
- 3. secretive -----
- 4. sensory -----
- 5. exclamatory -----

7.2.2 Nominal roots

To form adjectives, nominal roots take a bunch of suffixes such as *-al*, *-ary*, *-ful*, *-ic*, *-ical*, *-ish*, *-ly*, *-ous*, *-some* and *-y*. Below is the semantic network of each suffix.

⊙ [-AL]

The prototypical sketch of the suffix *-al* signifies relation. It comprises three senses. (a) ‘relating closely to the thing named by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed apply to inanimate entities. For example, *an environmental issue* is an issue that is related to the environment. Other examples include *medicinal*, *postal*, and so on. (b) ‘showing the proportion of the thing named by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots refer to dimensionality. For example, *an occasional vacation* is a vacation that occurs at infrequent intervals. Other examples include *colossal*, *proportional*. (c) ‘showing the location of the thing named by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots refer to names of places. For example, *a coastal town* is a town that is located on or near the coast. Other examples include *central*, *marginal*, and so on.

The peripheral sketch of the suffix *-al* signifies other senses. (a) ‘showing the character of the thing named by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed apply to humans. For example, *a brutal dictator* is a dictator who inflicts pain and suffering on his

people. Other examples include *maternal*, *cynical*, and so on. (b) ‘the act of doing the process named by the root’. This sense appears when the verbal roots are (in)transitive and the nouns formed imply action. For example, *approval* is the act of approving something. Other examples include *arrival*, *denial*, *rehearsal*, *removal*, *withdrawal*, and so on.

#### ◉ [-ARY]

As for the prototype, the suffix *-ary* signals relation. It consists of two senses. (a) ‘relating closely to the thing named by the root’. This sense succeeds when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed apply to inanimate entities. For example, *a budgetary policy* is a policy that relates to the budget. A handful of other adjectives includes *customary*, *dietary*, *disciplinary*, *elementary*, and so on. (b) ‘serving to do the thing named by the root’. This sense succeeds when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed name inanimate characteristics. For example, *a complementary list* is a list that serves to complete another. A handful of other adjectives includes *complimentary*, *exemplary*, *inflationary*, *precautionary*, *supplementary*, and so on.

As for the periphery, the suffix *-ary* consists of the sense ‘embodying the characteristics of the entity referred to by the root’. This sense succeeds when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed name animate characteristics. For example, *a legendary broadcaster* is a broadcaster who embodies a legend in being famous and admired. A handful of other adjectives includes *honorary*, *visionary*, and so on.

#### ◉ [-FUL]

The foreground contributions of the suffix *-ful* demonstrate possession. It has three senses. (a) ‘full of the quality denoted by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, implying emotion. For example, *a merciful ruler* is a ruler who is full of mercy. A collection of other adjectives includes *delightful*, *fearful*, *hateful*, *remorseful*, *spiteful*, and so on. (b) ‘featuring the quality denoted by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, implying cognition. For example, *a thoughtful person* is a person who shows consideration. A collection of other adjectives includes *artful*, *careful*, *faithful*, *hopeful*, *insightful*, and so on. (c) ‘displaying the quality denoted by the root’. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract, implying characteristics. For example, *a graceful movement* is a movement that displays



beauty. A collection of other adjectives includes *fanciful*, *masterful*, *neglectful*, *rightful*, *tasteful*, and so on.

The background contributions of the suffix *-ful* demonstrate action. It has two senses. (a) 'giving rise to the quality denoted by the root'. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, a *hurtful* remark is a remark that gives rise to emotional pain. A collection of other adjectives includes *harmful*, *mournful*, *painful*, *rueful*, *stressful*, and so on. (b) 'likely to do the action denoted by the root'. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, a *forgetful* child is a child who is apt to forget. A collection of other adjectives includes *boastful*, *fretful*, *wakeful*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-IC]

In its foremost semantic range, the suffix *-ic* describes relation. It has five senses. (a) 'pertaining to the thing named by the root'. This sense happens when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, a *telegraphic apparatus* is an apparatus that pertains to telegraph. Similar adjectives are *allergic*, *atomic*, *cubic*, *mythic*, *photographic*, and so on. Such adjectives do not have a counterpart ending in *-ical*. (b) 'pertaining to the typical feature of the thing named by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract. In this nuance, both *-ic* and *-ical* are in competition. For example, a *philosophic stance* is a stance that is calm and rational in difficult situations. For similar adjectives, see [-ICAL]. (c) 'pertaining to the place or the language named by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are proper nouns. For example, an *Icelandic saga* is a saga that pertains to Iceland. Similar adjectives are *Arabic*, *Celtic*, *Teutonic*, and so on. (d) 'pertaining to the person named by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are proper. For example, *Byronic style* is style that pertains to the English poet Byron. Similar adjectives are *Miltonic*, *Socratic*, and so on. (e) 'applying the typical feature of the thing named by the root'. Sometimes, the roots end in *-ist*. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, an *optimistic person* is a person who expects the best to happen. Similar adjectives are *artistic*, *heroic*, *idealistic*, *nationalistic*, *pedantic*, and so on.

In its peripheral semantic range, the suffix *-ic* describes possession with the sense 'having the element named by the root to a high degree'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, in *chloric/chlorous acid* the adjective ending in *-ic* contains a higher proportion of acid than the adjective ending in *-ous*. For similar adjectives, look at [-OUS].

◎ [-ICAL]

The central sense of the suffix *-ical* is ‘pertaining to the thing named by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *a geographical location* is a location that pertains to geography. Similar adjectives are *cyclical*, *symmetrical*, and so on. In this use, it competes with the suffix *-ic*, but there is a difference in semantic range. The suffix *-ic* is reserved to emphasize the core feature of the noun expressed in the root. By contrast, the suffix *-ical* is reserved to merely stress the relationship between the noun and the field of knowledge or subject of study expressed in the root. Adjectives formed with *-ical* have thus a wider or more transferred semantic range than corresponding adjectives formed with *-ic*. For example, *a philosophical essay* is an essay that pertains to philosophy. Similar adjectives ending in both *-ic* and *-ical* include *classic/al*, *economic/al*, *geometric/al*, *graphic/al*, *historic/al*, *ironic/al*, *numeric/al*, *politic/al*, *problematic/al*, *prophetic/al*, *rhythmic/al*, *symmetric/al*, and so on. For the differences in meaning, see Chapter 9.

**Exercise 7.9**

Write the correct adjective in the space provided by adding suffixes to the roots given in brackets.

1. They asked a ----- amount of money for the house. (colossus)
2. Some patients have some special ----- requirements. (diet)
3. The first track on the new album is surprisingly ----- . (tune)
4. Getting everyone there on time might prove ----- . (problem)
5. The new orchestra played ----- music at the concert. (rhythm)

◎ [-ISH]

The prototypical behaviour of the suffix *-ish* features evaluation. It has three variants. (a) ‘having the character of the thing specified by the root’. This sense realizes when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *a hellish experience* is an experience that is very unpleasant. A sample list of other adjectives with negative implications includes *amateurish*, *brackish*, *freakish*, *raffish*, and so on. In rare cases, the roots describe desirable qualities. For example, *a modish outfit* is an outfit that is fashionable. A sample list of other adjectives with positive implications includes *stylish*, *roguish*, and so on. (b) ‘characteristic of the thing specified by the root’. This sense realizes when

the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, a *bookish speech* is a speech which is literary or pedantic in tone or style. A sample list of other adjectives includes (human) *fiendish*, *girlish*, *mannish*, *snobbish*, *thuggish*; (animal) *bearish*, *doggish*, *mulish*, *owlish*, *wolfish*, and so on. (c) 'having the quality specified by the root to some degree'. This sense realizes when the adjectival roots are qualitative. For example, a *longish letter* is a letter that is fairly or somewhat long. A sample list of other adjectives with this meaning includes *biggish*, *bluish*, *oldish*, *tallish*, *youngish*, and so on.

The peripheral behaviour of the suffix *-ish* features relation with the sense 'coming from or belonging to the thing specified by the root'. This sense realizes when the nominal roots are proper nouns. For example, *Irish coffee* is coffee which originates in Ireland. A sample list of other adjectives with this meaning includes *British*, *Danish*, *Finnish*, *Spanish*, *Swedish*, and so on.

#### © [-LY]

The prototypical references of the suffix *-ly* signal evaluation. It has five senses. (a) 'befitting the thing indicated by the root'. This sense follows when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, a *motherly treatment* is a treatment that befits a mother. Similar adjectives are *brotherly*, *cowardly*, *fatherly*, *princely*, *rascally*, and so on. (b) 'having the manner of the thing indicated by the root'. This sense follows when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, a *timely meeting* is a meeting that happens at an appropriate time. Similar adjectives include *leisurely*, *lively*, and so on. (c) 'bearing the character of the thing indicated by the root'. This sense follows when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, a *costly holiday* is a holiday that is expensive. Similar adjectives include *heavenly*, *shapely*, *stately*, *worldly*, and so on. (d) 'recurring with the regularity of the thing indicated by the root'. This sense follows when the nominal roots refer to units of time. For example, a *daily shower* is a shower that recurs every day. Similar adjectives include *hourly*, *quarterly*, *fortnightly*, *monthly*, *weekly*, and so on. (e) 'having the nature of the thing indicated by the root'. This sense follows when the adjectival roots are qualitative. For example, a *deadly conversation* is a conversation that is extremely boring. Similar adjectives include *goodly*, *kindly*, *poorly*, *sickly*, *weakly*, and so on.

The peripheral reference of the suffix *-ly* signals motion. It has the sense 'moving towards or coming from the point indicated by the root'. This sense follows when the nominal roots refer to compass points. For example, an *easterly wind* is a wind that comes from the east.

◎ [-OUS]

In its basic use, the suffix *-ous* expresses possession. It has four senses. (a) ‘abounding in the thing denoted by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, and the derived adjectives apply to non-humans. For example, a *dangerous mission* is a mission that abounds in potential harm or loss. Additional adjectives include *capacious*, *cavernous*, *perilous*, *riotous*, *voluminous*, and so on. (b) ‘filled with the thing denoted by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, and the derived adjectives apply to humans. For example, an *ambitious person* is a person who shows a strong desire for success or achievement. Additional adjectives include *contemptuous*, *desirous*, *envious*, *piteous*, *sensuous*, and so on. (c) ‘characterized by the thing denoted by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, and the derived adjectives apply to human actions. For example, a *courteous man* is a man who is marked by good manners. Additional adjectives include *barbarous*, *courageous*, *malicious*, *traitorous*, *virtuous*, and so on. (d) ‘causing or inspiring the thing denoted by the root’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, and the derived adjectives apply to non-humans. For example, a *hazardous journey* is a journey that involves risk or danger. Additional adjectives include *arduous*, *disastrous*, *grievous*, *ruinous*, *slumberous*, and so on.

In its peripheral use, the suffix *-ous* evokes the sense ‘having the element denoted by the root to a low degree’. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract, naming chemical substances. For example, in *chlorous/chloric acid* the adjective ending in *-ous* contains a lower proportion of acid than the adjective ending in *-ic*. Additional adjectives include *cuprous/cupric oxide*, a *nitrous/nitric acid*, a *sulphurous/sulphuric fume*, *ferrous/ferric salts*, *mercurous/mercuric chloride*, and so on.

◎ [-SOME]

The most salient part of the suffix *-some* labels possession. It has three senses. (a) ‘having the thing denoted by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *toilsome efforts* are efforts that are attended with toil, *flavoursome wine* is wine that has flavour, and *troublesome times* are times full of trouble. (b) ‘willing to do the thing denoted by the root’. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, a *quarrelsome child* is a child who is given to quarrelling, and a *venturesome traveller* is a

traveller who is willing to venture. (c) 'causing or inspiring the thing denoted by the root'. This sense arises when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, a *worrisome affair* is an affair that makes people distressed or worried. Other examples are (verbal roots) *tiresome*, *bothersome*; (adjectival roots) *lonesome*, *loathsome*, *wearisome*, and so on.

The less salient part of the suffix *-some* labels number with the sense 'a group containing the number denoted by the root'. This sense arises when the roots are numerals. For example, a *foursome* is a group of four.

#### ◉ [-Y]

The prototypical pattern of the suffix *-y* reflects possession. It includes six senses. (a) 'having the content of the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are non-countable nouns. For example, a *peppery salad* is a salad that contains pepper. Other adjectives are *chalky*, *cottony*, *salty*, *yeasty*, and so on. (b) 'having the appearance of the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are countable nouns. For example, *baggy trousers* are trousers that have the appearance of bags in being loose. Other adjectives are *horny*, *batty*, and so on. (c) 'having the trait of the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are abstract. For examples, a *guilty look* is a look that is remorseful. Other adjectives includes *bossy*, *gloomy*, *greedy*, *moody*, *witty*, and so on. In rare cases, the roots apply to things. For example, a *bendy mast* is a mast that is pliable, and a *creaky economy* is an economy which is shaky or infirm. (d) 'covered with the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *sandy beach* is a beach that is covered with sand. Other adjectives are *icy*, *juicy*, *thorny*, *weedy*, and so on. (e) 'producing or triggering the thing expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, a *teary story* is a story that triggers tears. Other adjectives are *chilly*, *shady*, and so on. (f) 'tending to do the action expressed by the root'. This sense occurs when the verbal roots are (in)transitive. For example, a *sleepy baby* is a baby who tends to sleep a lot. Other adjectives includes *chatty*, *creepy*, *scary*, *shivery*, *weepy*, and so on. In some cases, the roots apply to things. For example, a *sticky substance* is a substance that tends to stick. Other adjectives includes *floppy*, *floaty*, and so on.

The peripheral pattern of the suffix *-y* reflects resemblance. It has two senses. (a) 'resembling the thing expressed by the root in quality'. This sense occurs when the nominal roots name physical substances. For example, an *oaky wine* is wine that tastes of oak. Other adjectives are *earthy*, *waxy*, *woody*,

*woolly*, and so on. (b) ‘suggesting the colour expressed by the root’. The suffix *-y* describes something as being similar to the colour, while the suffix *-ish* describes something as having a small amount of the colour. For example, *greeny purple* is a shade of purple that is similar to green. Other adjectives include *bluey green*, *greeny blue*, *reddy brown*, *yellowy black*, and so on.

### Exercise 7.10

Give the prototypical meaning of each suffix in the following list. Then, give a sample word for each.

- |          |       |       |
|----------|-------|-------|
| 1. -ish  | ----- | ----- |
| 2. -ly   | ----- | ----- |
| 3. -ous  | ----- | ----- |
| 4. -some | ----- | ----- |
| 5. -y    | ----- | ----- |

### 7.2.3 Adjectival roots

Adjectives can also be formed from adjectival roots by means of adjectival suffixes. This has been discussed under the suffixes *-y*, *-ish* and *-ly* in the preceding sections.

## 7.3 Verb-forming suffixes

A verb-forming suffix, also called a **verbal suffix** or a **verbalizer**, is a bound morpheme which is added to the end of a free morpheme to form a verb. The free morpheme can be a noun or an adjective. For example, *-en* is a bound morpheme that is dependent on the free morpheme *dark* to form the noun *darken*, which means making something dark.

### 7.3.1 Nominal roots

The suffixes *-ate* *-ify* and *-ise* are added to nominal roots to form verbs. Below is the semantic network of each suffix.

#### ◎ [-ATE]

The suffix *-ate* is originally used to form transitive verbs and denotes causation. It has three senses. (a) ‘act upon the entity in the manner contained in the

root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, *to vaccinate* is to give someone a vaccine, usually by injection. Similar verbs are *assassinate*, *capacitate*, and so on. (b) 'make the thing contained in the root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *to hyphenate* is to use a hyphen to join or divide two words or two parts of a word. Similar verbs include *orchestrate*, *paginate*, and so on. (c) 'combine or treat something with the thing contained in the root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are chemical substances. For example, *to chlorinate* is to combine or treat something with chlorine. Similar verbs are *benzoinate*, *fluoridate*, *hydrogenate*, and so on.

The suffix *-ate* is marginally used to form nouns and adjectives having two senses. (a) 'rank or office contained in the root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are concrete and the nouns formed denote rank, office or function. For example, *a consulate* is the office of a consul. Similar nouns are *archdeaconate*, *directorate*, *doctorate*, *laureate*, *protectorate*, and so on. (b) 'showing the features of the thing contained in the root'. This sense arises when the nominal roots are abstract and the adjectives formed are qualitative. For example, *a compassionate response* is a response that shows compassion, a strong feeling of sympathy. Similar adjectives are *fortunate*, *Latinate*, *passionate*, *proportionate*, *triple*, and so on.

#### ◎ [-IFY]

The prototypical character of the suffix *-ify*, or *-fy*, displays causation in forming transitive verbs. It has three senses. (a) 'cause an increase in the quality expressed in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are non-countable. For example, *to terrify* is to make someone very frightened. Other verbs include *beautify*, *glorify*, *horrify*, *pacify*, *sanctify*; and so on. The same sense appears when the roots are adjectival, as in *amplify*, *diversify*, *humidify*, *purify*, *solidify*, and so on. (b) 'convert into the thing expressed in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are countable. For example, *to codify* is to classify and organize things, such as laws or rules, into a code. Other verbs include *classify*, *modify*, *notify*, *signify*, *syllabify*, and so on. (c) 'to serve as the thing expressed in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are countable. For example, *to exemplify* is to be a typical illustration of something. Other verbs include *identify*, *personify*, *typify*, and so on.

The peripheral character of the suffix *-ify* displays causation in forming (in)transitive verbs. It has two senses. (a) 'turn into or become the thing

expressed in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are concrete. For example, *to acidify* is to turn something into acid or to become acid, and *to mummify* is to preserve a dead body as a mummy. **(b)** 'produce the thing expressed in the root'. This sense appears when the nominal roots are abstract. For example, *to testify* is to give evidence or testimony in a court of law, and *to speechify* is to give a speech, especially in a boring way or in a self-important manner.

### Exercise 7.11

Add suffixes to the following list of roots to produce verbs. Write the verbs in the spaces provided.

1. test                   -----
2. note                  -----
3. page                  -----
4. glory                 -----
5. assassin             -----

#### ◎ [-ISE]

The primary use of the suffix *-ise*, or its alternative *-ize*, implies causation. In exhibits five senses in forming transitive verbs. **(a)** 'render something the quality mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the adjectival roots are qualitative. For example, *to modernise* is to render something modern. Verbs of similar behaviour are *centralise*, *civilise*, *equalise*, *legalise*, *stabilise*, and so on. The same sense emerges when the roots are nominal. For example, *to glamorise* is to render something attractive. Verbs of similar behaviour are *colonise*, *humanise*, *magnetise*, *materialise*, *victimise*, and so on. **(b)** 'arrange an entity according to the thing mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are abstract, implying non-action. For example, *to organise* is to arrange something according to a plan. Verbs of similar behaviour are *categorise*, *itemise*, *standardise*, *symbolise*, *systemise*, and so on. **(c)** 'apply to an entity the thing mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are abstract, implying action. For example, *to scrutinise* is to examine something closely and thoroughly. Verbs of similar behaviour are *dramatise*, *memorise*, *monopolise*, *pasteurise*, *urbanise*, and so on. **(d)** 'impart to an entity the thing mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are abstract, applying to (in)animates. For example,



*to eulogise* is to praise someone or something. Verbs of similar behaviour are (animate) *anesthetise*, *criticise*, *satirise*; (inanimate) *characterise*, *jeopardise*, *subsidise*, and so on. (e) 'treat an entity in the way mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are abstract, applying to animates. For example, *to idolise* is to treat somebody with great admiration. Verbs of similar behaviour are *idealise*, *patronise*, *stigmatiser*, *sympathise*, *terrorise*, and so on.

The secondary use of the suffix *-ise* implies causation. It exhibits three senses in forming (in)transitive verbs. (a) 'do the activity mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are common nouns. For example, *to economise* is to reduce expenditure. Verbs of similar behaviour are (nominal roots) *botanise*, *evangelise*, *geologise*, *philosophise*, *theorise*; (adjectival roots) *dogmatise*, *moralise*, *socialise*, and so on. (b) 'make or become the thing mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are proper nouns. For example, *to westernise* is to make or become western in character. Verbs of similar behaviour are *despotise*, *Germanise*, *Platonise*, *Latinise*, *Romanise*, and so on. (c) 'combine with the thing mentioned in the root'. This sense emerges when the nominal roots are chemical substances. For example, *to oxidise* is to combine a substance with oxygen. Verbs of similar behaviour are *aerosolise*, *carbonise*, *etherise*, *ionise*, *silverise*, and so on.

### 7.3.2 Adjectival roots

Verbs can also be derived from adjectival roots. The only suffix that is in operation is *-en*. Below is the semantic network of the suffix.

#### ◎ [-EN]

Originally, the suffix *-en* forms adjectives. It conveys three senses. (a) 'being in the state designated by the root'. This sense arises when the verbal bases are past participles. For example, *a forbidden subject* is a subject that is not allowed to be discussed. Other adjectives are *broken*, *beaten*, *written*, and so on. (b) 'made of the thing designated by the root'. This sense arises when the nominal bases are concrete, naming materials. For example, *a wooden fence* is a fence that is made of wood. Adjectives behaving similarly are *earthen*, *golden*, *oaken*, *silken*, *waxen*, and so on. (c) 'situated in the region expressed by the root'. This sense arises when the nominal bases are abstract, naming geographic directions. For example, *an eastern suburb* is a suburb that is

situated in the east. Adjectives behaving similarly are *northern*, *southern*, *western*, and so on.

By extension, the suffix *-en* forms verbs denoting causation. It conveys the sense ‘make something have the quality designated by the root’. This sense arises when the adjectival bases are qualitative. For example, *to broaden* is to make something wider. Verbs behaving similarly are (adjectival roots) *darken*, *harden*, *loosen*, *moisten*, *shorten*; (nominal roots) *frighten*, *heighten*, *strengthen*, *threaten*, *sweeten*, and so on.

## Exercise 7.12

Using the suffix given, write the composite verb in the blank which contains the meaning of the phrase.

- |                              |      |       |
|------------------------------|------|-------|
| 1. To make something new     | -ise | ----- |
| 2. To give someone authority | -ise | ----- |
| 3. To treat somebody ideally | -ise | ----- |
| 4. To make something high    | -en  | ----- |
| 5. To make something strong  | -en  | ----- |

## Summary

In this chapter, I explored the role of the category theory in the semantic description of suffixes. In accordance with this theory, any suffix forms a complex category of interrelated senses. A **category** is a network of senses structured in terms of prototype and periphery. A suffix has a series of senses with an exemplar, called the **prototype**. The prototype is the most widely used sense. The remaining senses of a category, called the **periphery**, are derived from the prototype via semantic extensions. The senses of a suffix are structured in terms of their distance from the prototype. The more similar a sense is, the nearer it is to the prototype. The less similar a sense is, the more distant it is from the prototype. The meaning of a suffix is dependent on the free morpheme to which it is added. In each formation, the suffix displays a different meaning which is part of its polysemous character. The meaning of a composite word is a combination of the semantic properties of both the free morpheme and the suffix. A category then helps to establish the senses of a suffix and provide exact definitions for them. On the basis of these definitions, it becomes feasible to group converging suffixes in domains. This task is discussed in the upcoming chapter.

The different categories in which suffixes in English appear are summarized in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Categories of suffixes

Suffixes						
Noun-forming			Adjective-forming		Verb-forming	
Verbal roots	Adjectival roots	Nominal roots	Verbal roots	Nominal roots	Nominal roots	Adjectival roots
-ee	-ce	-age	-able	-al	-ate	-en
-er	-cy	-(i)an	-ant	-ary	-ify	
-ion	-ity	-dom	-ed	-ful	-ise	
-ment	-ness	-hood	-en	-ic		
-ure		-ism	-ible	-ical		
		-ist	-ing	-ish		
		-(e)ry	-ive	-ly		
		-ship	-ory	-ous		
		-ster		-some		
				-y		

# Suffixal Domains

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Chapter 8 explores the semantic tasks of English suffixes when they are set against each other in domains. Applying the cognitive assumption that the meanings of linguistic items can best be demarcated by the cognitive domains in which they occur, it is argued that meanings of suffixes can be defined by understanding the structure of the domains which embrace them and the particular facets which they fill within the domains. Due to their polysemy, suffixes tend to partake in more than one domain. The aim of the chapter is to reveal information about the specific meanings of suffixes. The chapter includes two sections. Section 8.1 introduces domains evoked by noun-forming suffixes: process, characterization, representation and agenthood. Section 8.2 introduces domains evoked by adjective-forming suffixes: voice, aspect, evaluation, possession, relation and resemblance. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I explain the essence of the domain and draw its multi-faceted structure. Second, I identify the particular facet which a given suffix occupies. Third, I provide examples to demonstrate the distinctive use of each suffix.

## 8.1 Domains evoked by nominal suffixes

A nominal suffix is a bound morpheme that is added to the end of a free morpheme to form a noun. Nominal suffixes evoke, relative to their definitional analyses, various domains. A **domain** is a knowledge structure which comprises a set of suffixes. Within the domains, the suffixes occupy different facets. A **facet** is a phase in a domain which symbolizes a particular concept. Domains are important in that they house suffixes under one roof and single out their individual roles. The meaning of a suffix consists of the way it represents the facet within the domain and the way it contrasts with the other suffixes. The suffixes help to represent the different facets of a domain, and so uncover the meanings of one another. Below are the cognitive domains which nominal suffixes evoke.

### 8.1.1 Process

The domain of **process** is an area of knowledge which captures an action that one takes to achieve a particular result. The action is done in a particular manner, and the result takes a particular form. As the definition reveals, the process incorporates two main components: action and result. Action refers to anything that one does in order to deal with or achieve a result. Action leading to a result can be carried out in a two-fold manner: a sequence or a whole. Sequence is a particular order in which the parts of an action follow each other. Whole includes all the parts, complete or undivided. Result, by contrast, refers to the consequence that occurs as the outcome of an action. Result stemming from action can take a two-fold form: an instance or a type. Instance is a single occurrence of a result. It serves as a pattern of a specific kind. Type is a specimen of a result. It serves as representative of a group as a whole.

In morphology, the domain of **process** is symbolized by the nominal suffixes *-al*, *-ion*, *-ce* and *-ment*, but they differ in activating different components of it. Action is epitomized by the nominal suffixes *-al* and *-ion*, but with a difference in use. The suffix *-al* means ‘the act of doing the process named by the root’. It describes the sequential act of achieving a result. The suffix *-ion* means ‘the act of doing the process referred to in the root’. It describes the whole act of achieving a result. By contrast, result is embodied by the nominal suffixes *-ce* and *-ment*, but with a difference in use. The suffix *-ce* means ‘the result of the process indicated by the root’. It indicates an instance of a result, that is, an event or an occurrence. The suffix *-ment* means ‘the result of the process referred to by the root’. It indicates a type of result, that is, a species or a class.

The following examples show how each nominalizing suffix activates a different component within the domain of process.

- (1) a. removal, withdrawal, arrival
- b. detention, explanation, rebellion
- c. observance, insurance, forbearance
- d. amusement, development, arrangement

The examples given in (1) contain nouns derived by adding nominal suffixes to verbal roots. The suffixes denote process, but they have different focuses. In (1a), the suffix *-al* derives nouns which focus on a sequential act. For example, *removal* means ‘the act of taking something or someone away from a location

or position'. In (1b), the suffix *-ion* derives nouns which focus on a whole act. For example, *detention* means 'the act of detaining someone for a short time, either as punishment or until a trial can be held'. In (1c), the suffix *-ce* derives nouns which focus on an instance of a result. For example, *observance* means 'the compliance with the requirements of law, morality or ritual'. In (1d), the suffix *-ment* derives nouns which focus on a type of a result. For example, *amusement* means 'the feeling that something is funny or entertaining'.

## Exercise 8.1

Derive nouns from the roots listed below, using the right suffix in the domain of process which fits the meaning of the facet given.

- |                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1. withdraw----- | = | the sequential act of taking away.       |
| 2. rebel-----    | = | the whole act of refusing to obey.       |
| 3. insure-----   | = | the instance of protecting against harm. |
| 4. develop-----  | = | the type of changing and growing.        |

## 8.1.2 Characterization

The domain of **characterization** is a sphere of knowledge which describes the character of an entity, be it animate or inanimate. It is the act of describing the apparent characteristics or inherent features of an entity. As the definition discloses, characterizing an entity incorporates two different features: apparent and inherent. An apparent feature is a feature that is exposed to sight or open to view. It is a feature that is readily felt or clearly understood. An apparent feature subsumes either the state in which an entity is, or the status which an entity enjoys. By contrast, an inherent feature is a feature that forms a permanent element of an entity. It is a feature that exists as an essential constituent of an entity. An inherent feature subsumes either the trait, that is, the distinguishing feature of the nature of an entity, or the mode, that is, the manner, the way or the form in which the entity occurs or is done.

In morphology, the domain of **characterization** is manifested by the nominal suffixes *-ce*, *-cy*, *-ness* and *-ity*, but they differ in highlighting distinct features of it. An apparent feature is actualized by the suffixes *-ce* and *-cy*. The suffix *-ce* means 'the state indicated by the root'. It denotes the state of being an entity is in. The suffix *-cy* means 'an example of the state indicated by the root'. It denotes the status that the entity reaches. By contrast, an inherent feature is realized by the suffixes *-ness* and *-ity*. The suffix *-ness* means 'the trait

denoted by the root'. It pinpoints the trait that distinguishes an entity. The suffix *-ity* means 'the mode of dealing with the situation designated by the root'. It pinpoints the mode in which the entity is carried out.

The following examples illustrate how each nominalizing suffix signifies a different feature within the domain of characterization.

- (2) a. ignorance, vigilance, confidence
- b. emergency, transparency, dependency
- c. boldness, gentleness, awareness
- d. hostility, brutality, sensitivity

The examples given in (2) contain nouns derived by adding nominal suffixes to adjectival roots. The suffixes denote characterization, but they signify different features. In (2a), the suffix *-ce* derives nouns which signify actual states. For example, *ignorance* means 'the state of being ignorant', lacking knowledge or information. In (2b), the suffix *-cy* derives nouns which signify resulting statuses. For example, *emergency* means 'a serious situation or sudden crisis, usually unforeseen, which requires immediate action'. In (2c), the suffix *-ness* derives nouns which signify traits of entities. For example, *boldness* means 'the trait of being bold', being confident and courageous before danger. In (2d), the suffix *-ity* derives nouns which signify modes of performance. For example, *hostility* means 'the mode of being hostile', being unfriendly or antagonistic.

Exercise 8.2

Give the facet within the domain of characterization which the suffix represents in each of the following nouns.

- 1. vigilance -----
- 2. transparency -----
- 3. gentleness -----
- 4. brutality -----

8.1.3 Representation

The domain of **representation** is a field of knowledge which incorporates the description of one or more members of the same group. It is the act of providing an account of an entity, no matter whether it is abstract or concrete,

animate or inanimate, large or small. As the definition unveils, the domain of representation incorporates two components: individuality and collectivity. Individuality involves one entity, a person or an object considered separately from the rest of the group or set. Describing an individual entity usually involves talking about the place where it exists, the condition in which it is, the belief which it holds, or the position which it occupies. By contrast, collectivity involves a number of entities that share something in common and function together. Describing a group usually involves talking about number, whether the group exists in large or small numbers.

In morphology, the domain of **representation** is designated by the nominal suffixes *-dom*, *-hood*, *-ism*, *-ship*, *-age* and *-(e)ry*, but they denote different parts of it. Individuality is encoded by the nominal suffixes *-dom*, *-hood*, *-ism* and *-ship*. The suffix *-dom* means ‘the territory ruled by the person specified by the root’. It points to a place. The suffix *-hood* means ‘the condition of being what is referred to by the root’. It stands for a condition. The suffix *-ism* means ‘the belief embodied in the thing named by the root’. It stands for a belief. The suffix *-ship* means ‘the position of being what is signalled by the root’. It points to a position. By contrast, collectivity is encoded by the nominal suffixes *-age* and *-(e)ry*. The suffix *-age* means ‘a collection of things indicated by the root’. It suggests a small number of entities. The suffix *-(e)ry* means ‘a set of things expressed by the root’. It suggests a large number of entities.

The following examples indicate how each nominalizing suffix plays a different role within the domain of representation.

- (3) a. kingdom, dukedom, earldom
- b. nationhood, statehood, womanhood
- c. conservatism, liberalism, pacifism
- d. leadership, headship, professorship
- e. wreckage, fruitage, coinage
- f. pottery, crockery, gadgetry

The examples given in (3) contain nouns derived by adding nominal suffixes to nominal roots. The suffixes denote representation, but they serve different functions. In (3a), the suffix *-dom* derives nouns which describe places. For example, *kingdom* means ‘a country, state or territory which is ruled by a king or queen’. In (3b), the suffix *-hood* derives nouns which describe conditions. For example, *nationhood* means ‘the condition of having status as an independent nation’. In (3c), the suffix *-ism* derives nouns which describe viewpoints. For example, *conservatism* means ‘the view that prefers tradition



or disinclination to change’. In (3d), the suffix *-ship* derives nouns which describe positions. For example, *leadership* means ‘the position occupied by a leader’. In (3e), the suffix *-age* derives nouns which describe small numbers of things. For example, *wreckage* means ‘the remains of something that has been badly damaged or destroyed’. In (3f), the suffix *-(e)ry* derives nouns which describe large numbers of things. For example, *gadgetry* means ‘mechanical or electronic devices used for particular purposes’.

Exercise 8.3

Match the suffixes on the left with the appropriate facets on the right which they represent in the domain of representation.

- |               |          |       |
|---------------|----------|-------|
| 1. territory  | a. -ism  | ----- |
| 2. condition  | b. -ship | ----- |
| 3. belief     | c. -dom  | ----- |
| 4. position   | d. -ery  | ----- |
| 5. collection | e. -hood | ----- |

8.1.4 Agenthood

The domain of **agenthood** is a frame of knowledge which marks the role a person or a thing plays to produce a certain effect. It is about a person or a thing that performs a particular action or specializes in a particular subject. As the definition uncovers, agenthood incorporates two components: performance and speciality. Performance is the doing of an action or a piece of work, be it technical or non-technical. The action done can be either potential, that is, that can, but has not yet, come into being, or actual, that is, that has already been done. By contrast, speciality is the subject about which one knows a lot, or of which one has a lot of experience. The area of speciality can be either positive or negative, both aiming at scoring material benefit but with a difference in nature. A positive speciality attempts to provide welfare for a person or a group of people. By contrast, a negative speciality attempts to inflict a curse or a scourge on a person or group of people.

In morphology, the domain of **agenthood** is earmarked by the agent-forming suffixes *-ant*, *-er*, *-ee*, *-ist*, *-ian* and *-ster*, but they differ in naming different performers. Performance is represented by the nominal suffixes *-ant*, *-er* and *-ee*. The suffix *-ant* means ‘a person who performs the specific action signalled by the root’. It designates a performer of a potential technical

action. The suffix *-er* means ‘a person who performs the action labelled in the root’. It designates a performer of a potential non-technical action. The suffix *-ee* means ‘a person who has performed the action named by the root’. It designates a performer of an actual action. By contrast, speciality is represented by the nominal suffixes *-ist*, *-ian* and *-ster*. The suffix *-ist* means ‘a person who is versed in the knowledge field indicated by the root’. It refers to a specialist who is versed in a positive thing, a devotee of a scientific subject. The suffix *-ian* means ‘a person whose job involves the thing referred to in the root’. It refers to a specialist who is devoted to a positive thing, a practitioner of an authorized profession. The suffix *-ster* means ‘a person who performs the habitual action signified by the root’. It refers to a specialist who does something negative, a practitioner of a criminal or an outlawed profession.

The following examples demonstrate how each nominalizing suffix is assigned a different function within the domain of agenthood.

- (4) a. consultant, accountant, defendant
- b. baker, driver, reader
- c. devotee, escapee, standee
- d. botanist, ecologist, geologist
- e. beautician, clinician, technician
- f. gangster, mobster, ringster

The examples given in (4) contain nouns derived by adding agent-forming suffixes to verbal (a–c) and nominal (d–f) roots. The suffixes denote agenthood, but they have discrete references. In (4a), the suffix *-ant* derives nouns which refer to performers of potential technical actions. For example, *consultant* means ‘a person who provides expert advice professionally’. In (4b), the suffix *-er* derives nouns which refer to performers of potential non-technical actions. For example, *baker* means ‘a person who makes bread and cakes’. In (4c), the suffix *-ee* derives nouns which refer to performers of actual actions. For example, *devotee* means ‘a person who is very enthusiastic about someone or something’. In (4d), the suffix *-ist* derives nouns which refer to academic specialists involved in scientific subjects. For example, *botanist* means ‘a person who is involved in the scientific study of plants’. In (4e), the suffix *-ian* derives nouns which refer to specialists who practise certain occupations. For example, *beautician* means ‘a person whose job is to give beauty treatments’. In (4f), the suffix *-ster* derives nouns which refer to specialists

who do criminal acts mainly in return for money. For example, *gangster* means ‘a person who participates in organized crime’.

Exercise 8.4

Find a suitable word ending in the right suffix which exemplifies the facet provided within the domain of agenthood.

- 1. a performer of a potential technical action -----
- 2. a performer of a potential non-technical action -----
- 3. a performer of an actual action -----
- 4. a specialist of a positive action -----
- 5. a specialist of a negative action -----

## 8.2 Domains evoked by adjectival suffixes

An adjectival suffix is a bound morpheme that is added to the end of a free morpheme to form an adjective. Adjectival suffixes activate, relative to their definitional analyses, various domains. A **domain** is a coherent structure which relates suffixes together, captures their semantic specifications and shows how they correspond to different aspects. Within the domains, the suffixes occupy different facets. A **facet** is an angle in a domain which defines a particular concept. Domains are important in that the suffixes are organized as knowledge configurations in which each has a specific role to play and a specific task to fulfil. The basic idea is that one cannot understand the meaning of a suffix independently of the semantic knowledge it evokes, which usually involves other suffixes. Below are the cognitive domains which adjectival suffixes evoke.

### 8.2.1 Voice

The domain of **voice** is a knowledge configuration which points to the mode of an action which an entity performs. It is the form of the adjective which indicates the way the action is performed. English has two distinctions of voice: active and passive. In the active voice, the performer, a person or a thing, carries out the action to influence or change a situation. The action can influence either the self or others. Either the subject performs and receives

the action it initiates, or the subject performs the action but directs it to affect others. In the passive voice, the receiver, a person or a thing, suffers from the effect of the action carried out by others. The action can either influence a specific receiver or a general one. The relationship between the subject and the action can also involve cause and effect. Cause is the action which a performer does to produce an effect. Effect is the change which the receiver undergoes and which results from a cause.

In morphology, the domain of **voice** is defined by the adjectival suffixes *-ive*, *-ory*, *-able*, *-ible*, *-ing* and *-ed*, but with a difference in meaning. Active is represented by the suffixes *-ive* and *-ory*. Both mean 'performing or tending to perform the action referred to in the root', but there is a difference in meaning. The suffix *-ive* specifies an action produced by the same person. The suffix *-ory* specifies an action produced by another person. Passive is represented by the suffixes *-able* and *-ible*. Both mean 'capable of undergoing the action referred to in the root', but there is a difference in meaning. The suffix *-able* expresses actions which are restricted to specific contexts. The suffix *-ible* expresses actions used in general contexts. A concomitant difference in **voice** is indicated by the suffixes *-ing* and *-ed*, but with a difference in meaning. The suffix *-ing* represents cause and means 'causing the action referred to in the root'. The suffix *-ed* represents effect and means 'affected by the action referred to in the root'. In contrast to the suffixes *-ive* and *-ory* which describe a situation of permanent nature, the suffix *-ing* describes a situation of temporary nature. In contrast to the suffixes *-able* and *-ible* which describe a situation that changes through time, the suffix *-ed* describes a situation that continues for some time.

The examples given below underline the distributions of the adjectivizing suffixes within the domain of voice.

- (5) a. evasive, offensive, persuasive
- b. compensatory, derogatory, explicatory
- c. movable, countable, endurable
- d. convertible, deductible, expressible
- e. embarrassing, entertaining, surprising
- f. bored, confused, delighted

The examples given in (5) contain adjectives derived by adding adjectival suffixes to verbal roots. The suffixes denote voice, but they stand for various distinctions within it. In (5a), the suffix *-ive* derives adjectives which stand for active voice. For example, *evasive* means 'tending to escape performing

something’. In (5b), the suffix *-ory* derives adjectives which stand for active voice. For example, *compensatory* means ‘tending to offset the negative effects of something else’. In (5c), the suffix *-able* derives adjectives which stand for passive voice. For example, *movable* means ‘capable of being moved’. In (5d), the suffix *-ible* derives adjectives which stand for passive voice. For example, *convertible* means ‘capable of being converted’. In (5e), the suffix *-ing* derives adjectives which stand for cause. For example, *embarrassing* means ‘causing someone to feel uncomfortable’. In (5f), the suffix *-ed* derives adjectives which stand for effect. For example, *bored* means ‘feeling annoyed and weary because of having no interest in an activity’.

Exercise 8.5

Identify the facet in the domain of voice which the suffix activates in the following adjectives.

- 1. offensive -----
- 2. explicatory -----
- 3. countable -----
- 4. deductible -----
- 5. surprising -----
- 6. confused -----

8.2.2 Aspect

The domain of **aspect** is a knowledge base which shows how a situation develops through time. The semantic nature of an adjective often has something to do with the manner in which it is expressed or the way it is considered. English has two main aspectual types: states (stative) and occurrences (dynamic). States denote conditions that exist. Occurrences denote actions that take place. States do not involve change, while occurrences do. Occurrences include processes (durative) and achievements (punctual). Processes are conceived of as occurring for some time. Achievements are conceived of as being instantaneous or occurring at a point in time. Processes include activities (continuative) and accomplishments (terminative). Activities are unbounded; the situation can continue for a period of time. Accomplishments are bounded; the situation must necessarily come to an end.

In morphology, the domain of **aspect** is indicated by the adjectival suffixes *-ed*, *-ing*, *-ive* and *-ant*, but with a clear dissimilarity in value. Adjectives denoting

state end in *-ed*, which means ‘having been in the state signified by the root’. Adjectives denoting activity end in *-ing*, which means ‘keep on the activity signified by the root’. Adjectives signifying accomplishment end in *-ive* or *-ant*. Both mean ‘apt to do the action signified by the root’. Adjectives signifying achievement end in *-ant* or *-ive*. Both mean ‘liable to do the act signified by the root’. Yet, they differ in meaning. The suffix *-ive* is used more in non-technical contexts and stresses acts that apply to both animate and inanimate entities, whereas the suffix *-ant* is used more in technical contexts and focuses on embodied properties expressed in names of professions or substances.

The examples given below characterize the allocations of the adjectivizing suffixes within the domain of aspect.

- (6) a. accumulated, dated, faded
- b. decreasing, ailing, reigning
- c. intrusive, participative, regressive
- d. deviant, emigrant, repentant
- e. adoptive, extensive, restrictive
- f. observant, acceptant, reliant

The examples given in (6) contain adjectives derived by adding adjectival suffixes to verbal roots. The suffixes denote aspect, but they describe different types of it. In (6a), the suffix *-ed* derives adjectives which describe states. For example, *accumulated* means ‘having been collected’. In (6b), the suffix *-ing* derives adjectives which describe activities. For example, *decreasing* means ‘becoming less’. In (6c), the suffix *-ive* derives adjectives which describe accomplishments. For example, *intrusive* means ‘apt to interfere’. In (6d), the suffix *-ant* derives adjectives which describe accomplishments. For example, *deviant* means ‘apt to deviate’. In (6e), the suffix *-ive* derives adjectives which describe achievements. For example, *adoptive* means ‘liable to adopt’. In (6f), the suffix *-ant* derives adjectives which describe achievements. For example, *observant* means ‘liable to observe’.

### Exercise 8.6

The domain of aspect is realized by the suffixes in the examples below. How would you distinguish between the suffixes?

- 1. faded -----
- 2. ailing -----
- 3. emigrant -----

- 4. extensive -----
- 5. acceptant -----
- 6. participative -----

8.2.3 Evaluation

The domain of **evaluation**, or assessment, is a knowledge scenario which refers to the process of making a judgement, approving or disapproving, about a person or a situation. It refers to the act of forming an opinion after thinking carefully about someone or something. Evaluation can be neutral, favourable or unfavourable. Neutral evaluation is the act of describing someone or something as having both positive and negative characteristics with reference to manner or appearance. A positive characteristic displays a pleasant feature. A negative characteristic displays an unpleasant feature. Favourable evaluation is the act of approving the character of someone or something by highlighting its agreeable, pleasant or tasteful features. Unfavourable evaluation is the act of disapproving the character of someone or something by highlighting its disagreeable, unpleasant or distasteful features.

In morphology, the domain of **evaluation** is depicted by the adjectival suffixes *-ly*, *-y*, *-like* and *-ish*, but with subtle differences between them. Neutral evaluation is represented by the suffixes *-ly* and *-y*. The suffix *-ly* means ‘having the manner of the thing specified by the root’. It highlights manner attributes relative to the noun to which it is attached. The suffix *-y* means ‘having the appearance of the thing specified by the root’. It emphasizes the natural qualities of a thing which serves as a root, or the negative physical appearance of an animal which serves as a root. Favourable evaluation is represented by the suffix *-like*, which means ‘having the character of the thing specified by the root’. It describes character attributes that are positive. Unfavourable evaluation is represented by the suffix *-ish*, which means ‘having the character of the thing specified by the root’. It describes character in derogatory ways by making someone or something seem less important or less good.

The examples given below describe the contributions of the adjectivizing suffixes within the domain of evaluation.

- (7) a. courtly, timely, leisurely
- b. stony, baggy, batty
- c. prince-like, fox-like, flower-like,
- d. puckish, devilish, sluggish

The examples given in (7) contain adjectives derived by adding adjectival suffixes to nominal roots. The suffixes denote evaluation, but they stress different segments of it. In (7a), the suffix *-ly* derives adjectives which stress manner. For example, *courtly* means ‘polite, graceful and formal in manner’. In (7b), the suffix *-y* derives adjectives which stress appearance. For example, *stony* means ‘like stone in hardness’. In (7c), the suffix *-like* derives adjectives which stress character. For example, *prince-like* means ‘like a prince in nobility’. In (7d), the suffix *-ish* derives adjectives which stress character. For example, *puckish* means ‘playful and mischievous’.

### Exercise 8.7

Supply a suitable word ending with the right suffix to conform to the appropriate facet given in the domain of evaluation.

1. a thing which occurs at just the right time is -----
2. a thing that bulges or hangs loose like a bag is -----
3. a person who is cunning, artful like a fox is -----
4. a person who is cruel or evil like a devil is -----

## 8.2.4 Possession

The domain of **possession** is a knowledge frame which is concerned with the act of possessing something or the act of taking something into control. It refers to the state of owning an object, or to the state of having a particular quality. In possession, the thing retained is a quality which can be either exhibitivite or inductive. An exhibitivite quality is concerned with the form of something. The quality possessed is either abstract or concrete in nature. A quality of abstract nature shows emotional material. A quality of concrete nature shows physical material. By contrast, an inductive quality is concerned with causing an action. The action caused by the quality retained is either positive or negative in nature. An action of positive nature involves doing something to bring about a pleasant result. An action of negative nature involves doing something which brings about an unpleasant result.

In morphology, the domain of **possession** is labelled by the adjectival suffixes *-ful*, *-y*, *-ous* and *-some*, but with differences in use. Exhibitivite quality is represented by the suffixes *-ful* and *-y*. The suffix *-ful* means ‘full of the thing denoted by the root’. The suffix *-y* means ‘covered with the thing denoted by the root’. Both signify form, that is, the shape or appearance of something.



However, with *-ful* the thing possessed is abstract, whereas with *-y* it is concrete. Inductive quality is represented by the suffixes *-ous* and *-some*. The suffix *-ous* means ‘abounding in the thing denoted by the root’. The suffix *-some* means ‘causing or inspiring the thing denoted by the root’. Both imply causation, that is, triggering an action. However, with *-ous* the quality possessed is conducive mainly to an action of positive nature, whereas with *-some* it is conducive mainly to an action of negative nature.

The examples given below label the shares of the adjectivizing suffixes within the domain of possession.

- (8) a. gleeful, resentful, woeful
- b. grassy, muddy, smoky
- c. joyous, gracious, wondrous
- d. fearsome, burdensome, awesome

The examples given in (8) contain adjectives derived by adding adjectival suffixes to nominal roots. The suffixes denote possession, but they emphasize discrete elements of it. In (8a), the suffix *-ful* derives adjectives which emphasize abstract entities. For example, *gleeful* means ‘full of glee’. In (8b), the suffix *-y* derives adjectives which emphasize concrete entities. For example, *grassy* means ‘covered with grass’. In (8c), the suffix *-ous* derives adjectives which emphasize positive or prudent actions. For example, *joyous* means ‘abounding in joy’. In (8d), the suffix *-some* derives adjectives which emphasize negative or imprudent actions. For example, *fearsome* means ‘causing fear’.

Exercise 8.8

Comment on the differences in meaning implied by the rival suffixes in the domain of possession in the following adjectives.

- 1. a. muddy -----
- b. resentful -----
- 2. a. gracious -----
- b. awesome -----

8.2.5 Relation

The domain of **relation** is a knowledge area which encapsulates two or more things or parts as belonging or working together, or as being of the same kind. It refers to the connection that a thing has, or the reference an idea makes,

to other things or ideas. When the relation is between two objects, it is characterized as either essential or peripheral. An essential relation is one that is fundamental, indispensable and primary. It is a relation that is of central relevance or importance. A peripheral relation is one that is additional, secondary and superficial. It is a relation that is of minor relevance or importance. When the relation is between ideas, the focus is on either the core property of the idea or the field to which it is related. A core property is the essential and most important part of something. A relational property is one that merely specifies the relation between two entities.

In morphology, the domain of **relation** is tagged by the adjectival suffixes *-al*, *-ary*, *-ic* and *-ical*, but with diversity in use. Relationships between objects are coded by the suffixes *-al* and *-ary*. The suffix *-al* means ‘relating closely to the thing named by the root’. It singles out the essential characteristics of the thing described. The suffix *-ary* means ‘relating closely to the thing named by the root’. It points out the peripheral characteristics of the thing described. Relationships between ideas are coded by the suffixes *-ic* and *-ical*. The suffix *-ic* means ‘pertaining to the typical feature of the thing named by the root’. It sheds light on a core property of the thing. The suffix *-ical* means ‘pertaining to the area of the thing named by the root’. It sheds light on the field of knowledge borne by the combining root.

The examples given below depict the roles of the adjectivizing suffixes within the domain of relation.

- (9) a. medicinal, environmental, postal
- b. sedimentary, documentary, summary
- c. poetic, prophetic, tragic
- d. poetical, prophetical, tragical

The examples given in (9) contain adjectives derived by adding adjectival suffixes to nominal roots. The suffixes denote relation, but they refer to different components of it. In (9a), the suffix *-al* derives adjectives which refer to things primary for human beings. For example, *medicinal* means ‘related to medicine’. In (9b), the suffix *-ary* derives adjectives which refer to things secondary for human beings. For example, *sedimentary* means ‘related to sediment’. In (9c), the suffix *-ic* derives adjectives which refer to hallmarks of things. For example, *poetic* means ‘beautiful or expressive’. In (9d), the suffix *-ical* derives adjectives which refer to speciality of things. For example, *poetical* means ‘pertaining to poetry’.

Exercise 8.9

Name the facets within the domain of relation and then give words ending in the rival suffixes listed below.

1. a. -al

b. -ary
2. a. -ic

b. -ical
- -----
- -----

8.2.6 Resemblance

The domain of **resemblance** is a knowledge field which touches upon the similarity between one thing and another with a view to making it easier to understand or enhance its value. It involves similarity in either essence or appearance (for the latter see chapter 11). **Essence** involves two facets: substance or feature. Substance is the real physical matter of which a thing consists. It is about make, the physical material which helps to define a thing. Physical materials include metals or substances. Feature is the prominent quality which is characteristic of a thing. It is about property, the characteristic of the physical material which helps to define a thing.

In morphology, **resemblance** in essence is represented by the adjectival suffixes *-en* and *-y*, but with a difference in function. The suffix *-en* means ‘made of the thing designated by the root’. It highlights the material or substance, expressed by the combining root, which the modified thing is made of. The suffix *-y* means ‘resembling the thing specified by the root in quality’. It highlights a quality or feature, expressed by the combining root, which is a natural part of the modified thing.

The examples given below tell of the focuses of each adjectivizing suffix within the domain of resemblance.

- (10) a. golden, oaken, waxen
- b. silky, earthy, woody

The examples given in (10) contain adjectives derived by adding adjectival suffixes to nominal roots. The suffixes denote resemblance, but they activate different fragments of it. In (10a), the suffix *-en* derives adjectives which activate the fragment of substance. For example, *golden* means ‘made of gold’. In (10b), the suffix *-y* derives adjectives which activate the fragment of feature.

For example, *silky* means ‘resembling silk, especially in smoothness, softness, or shininess’.

### Exercise 8.10

State the semantic principle in the domain of resemblance which accounts for the deviation of the asterisked words in the following sentences.

1. A chair made of wood is \*woody. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A surface that is shiny is \*waxen. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Humour that is coarse is \*earthen. \_\_\_\_\_
4. A staircase made of oak is \*oaky. \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary

In this chapter, I appraised the impact of the domain theory on the semantic description of suffixes. With reference to this theory, suffixes form cognitive domains with respect to which their meanings can be identified. A **domain** is background knowledge with respect to which suffixes can be characterized. It consists of various facets. A **facet** is a portion of a domain which deals with a special physical or social experience. A domain encompasses two types of relationship. One is of similarity where the suffixes represent the overall meaning of the domain. Another is of difference where the suffixes represent discrete facets of the domain. Primarily, the meaning of a suffix can be understood in terms of the particular facet it stands for and the special position it occupies within the domain. Secondly, the meaning of a suffix becomes clear in terms of its relationship to the other suffixes in the domain. These domains identify the conceptual areas which the suffixes cover and the manner in which their meanings fit the discrete facets. Suffixes set therefore a good example of lexical relationships. The speaker’s use of a suffix depends on conceptualizing a situation. This task is taken up in the following chapter.

The (sub)domains which suffixes in English activate are summarized below. The (sub)domains activated by nominal suffixes are summarized in Table 8.1, whereas the (sub)domains activated by adjectival suffixes are given in Table 8.2.

Table 8.1 The (sub)domains activated by nominal suffixes

Domains	Facets	Exponents	Meaning differences
process	action	<i>-al</i>	denotes a sequential act
		<i>-ion</i>	denotes a whole act
	result	<i>-ce</i>	denotes an instance of a result
		<i>-ment</i>	denotes a type of a result
characterization	apparent features	<i>-ce</i>	denotes the state in which an entity is
		<i>-cy</i>	denotes the status which an entity reaches
	inherent features	<i>-ness</i>	denotes the trait distinguishing an entity
		<i>-ity</i>	denotes the mode distinguishing an entity
representation	individuality	<i>-dom</i>	place
		<i>-hood</i>	condition
		<i>-ism</i>	belief
		<i>-ship</i>	position
	collectivity	<i>-age</i>	a small number
		<i>-(e)ry</i>	a large number
	performance	<i>-ant</i>	names the performer of a potential, specific action
		<i>-er</i>	names the performer of a potential, social, generic action
		<i>-ee</i>	names the performer of an actual action
agenthood	speciality	<i>-ist</i>	names the inventor of a subject
		<i>-(i)an</i>	names the practitioner of a subject
		<i>-ster</i>	names the user of a skill

Table 8.2 The (sub)domains activated by adjectival suffixes

Domains	Facets	Exponents	Meaning differences
voice	agentivity	<i>-ive</i>	describes an action which an agent initiates and imposes on the self
		<i>-ory</i>	describes an action which an agent initiates and imposes on others
	patientivity	<i>-able</i>	describes an action, of specific nature, which a patient undergoes
		<i>-ible</i>	describes an action, of general nature, which a patient undergoes
	cause	<i>-ing</i>	describes an action which an agent causes
	effect	<i>-ed</i>	describes an effect which a patient receives

aspect	activity	<i>-ing</i>	profiles a process which goes on indefinitely
	state	<i>-ed</i>	profiles a condition which occurred in the past and stays the same for some time
	accomplish	<i>-ive</i>	profiles a process, in ordinary contexts, which comes to an end
	ment	<i>-ant</i>	profiles a process, in technical contexts, which comes to an end
	achievement	<i>-ive</i>	profiles a whole act, in ordinary contexts, which occurs at a point in time
		<i>-ant</i>	profiles a whole act, in technical contexts, which occurs at a point in time
evaluation	favourable	<i>-like</i>	evaluates character in a positive sense
	unfavourable	<i>-ish</i>	evaluates character in a negative sense
	neutral	<i>-ly</i>	evaluates manner in a positive way or a negative way
		<i>-y</i>	evaluates the appearance of an animal negatively or a thing positively
possession	exhibitive	<i>-ful</i>	possesses a quality that is natural
		<i>-y</i>	possesses a quality that is artificial
	inductive	<i>-ous</i> <i>-some</i>	possesses a quality that induces a proper action possesses a quality that induces an improper action
relation	internal	<i>-al</i>	relates to the principal characteristics of a thing
		<i>-ary</i>	relates to the secondary characteristics of a thing
	external	<i>-ic</i> <i>-ical</i>	relates to the core property of a thing relates to the area of knowledge or subject of study
resemblance	essence	<i>-en</i>	denotes the substance of which a thing is made
		<i>-y</i>	denotes the feature that a thing has

# Suffixal Construals

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Chapter 9 evaluates the effect of construal on the interpretation of word pairs ending with rival suffixes. Applying the cognitive assumption that alternation in language is not random, I argue that word pairs ending in suffixes are neither identical in meaning nor equal in use. The choice of a derived word correlates with the particular construal imposed on its root. The aim of the chapter is to show that word alternatives reflect different conceptualizations, and as a result are realized morphologically differently. In each morphological realization, it is the suffix that encodes the intended conceptualization of the speaker. The chapter includes two sections. Section 9.1 deals with the semantic distinctions symbolized by noun-forming suffixes. Section 9.2 deals with the semantic distinctions symbolized by adjective-forming suffixes. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I explore aspects of meaning. Second, I identify the suffixes signalling them. Third, I provide examples to illustrate the distinctive the uses of the word members.

## 9.1 Distinctions symbolized by nominal suffixes

A pair of nouns can be derived from the same root by means of suffixes belonging to any domain. Although such nouns are similar-looking, their meanings are markedly separate. The choice of a derived noun correlates with the particular construal imposed on its root. **Construal** refers to the particular image which the speaker selects to describe a particular situation for communicative purposes. The key to using these nouns rests on the types of perspective imposed on their multi-faceted content, which are lexically realized by different suffixes. **Perspective** is the viewpoint imposed on a scene which changes relative to the speaker's intention or the requirement of the discourse. Each noun has its meaning in the lexicon; it is the suffix which gives it its identity. Each suffix represents a particular construal which the speaker imposes on the root. The rival suffixes highlight the different facets which the root has. Below are details of the semantic distinctions and the rival suffixes which represent them.

### 9.1.1 Sequential vs. whole

The suffixes *-al* and *-ion* derive nominal pairs from common verbal roots. They signify action in the domain of **process**, but each describes a different aspect of it. The suffix *-al* describes the action as sequential, that is, in pieces, abridged and divided. In the light of this, the suffix *-al* can be defined as ‘the successive act named by the root’. As evidence, nouns ending in *-al* are preceded by verbs denoting performance, modified by adjectives describing physical processes, and followed by nouns referring to people or things. By contrast, the suffix *-ion* describes the action as a whole, that is, in one piece, unabridged and undivided. In the light of this, the suffix *-ion* can be defined as ‘the overall act named by the root’. As evidence, nouns ending in *-ion* are preceded by verbs denoting control, modified by adjectives describing vocal processes, and followed by nouns referring to substances or money. This distinction is evidenced by the nominal pair below:

- (1) dispersal vs. dispersion
  - a. He protested against the *dispersal* of the crowd by force.
  - b. She traced the *dispersion* of the odour throughout the house.

The two nouns under (1) encompass the verbal root *disperse*, which means ‘to diffuse over a large area, or to scatter abroad’. Nonetheless, construal connects them to different uses. In (1a), the noun *dispersal* means ‘the successive act of dispersing’. *Dispersal* is the action of scattering people or spreading things over a wide area. It is preceded by verbs such as *enforce*, *govern*, *lead to*, *protest*, *result in*; modified by adjectives such as *explosive*, *gradual*, *quick*, *rapid*, *violent*; followed by nouns referring to people, animals, flora, objects, and so on. In (1b), the noun *dispersion* means ‘the overall act of dispersing’. *Dispersion* is the action of spreading or the state of being scattered. It is preceded by verbs such as *achieve*, *control*, *prevent*, *reduce*, *trace*; modified by adjectives such as *atmospheric*, *digital*, *practical*, *spatial*, *wide*; followed by nouns referring to substances such as *air*, *gas*, *light*, *odour*, *pigment*, or money such as *income*, *installations*, *material*, *power*, *returns*, and so on.

#### Exercise 9.1

Below are nominal pairs which share common roots but construe process differently. For each one, give the semantic principle which allows the suffix to appear.



1. disposal	-----
disposition	-----
2. recital	-----
recitation	-----

9.1.2 Instance vs. type

The suffixes *-ce* and *-ment* derive nominal pairs from common verbal roots. They signify result in the domain of **process**, but each has a distinctly different type of focus. The suffix *-ce* focuses on the instance of the result, used in a specific, definite or clear-cut context. In the light of this, the suffix *-ce* can be defined as ‘the specific result labelled in the root’. As evidence, nouns ending in *-ce* are preceded by verbs denoting preservation or distribution, adjectives describing essence or effect, and followed by nouns referring to physical objects. By comparison, the suffix *-ment* focuses on the type of the result, used in a general, vague or approximate context. In the light of this, the suffix *-ment* can be defined as ‘the general result labelled in the root’. As evidence, nouns ending in *-ment* are preceded by verbs denoting consideration or provision, adjectives describing quality or degree, and followed by nouns referring to non-physical objects. This distinction is exemplified by the nominal pair below.

- (2) deterence vs. determent
  - a. Heavy weapons maintain *deterrence* in the face of a threat.
  - b. They consider tougher measures as a *determent* to truancy.

The two nouns under (2) involve the verbal root *deter*, which means ‘to prevent from action by fear of consequences, difficulty or risk’. Nevertheless, construal restricts them to separate uses. In (2a), the noun *deterence* means ‘the specific result of deterring’. *Deterence* is a means of preventing war by holding weapons, especially nuclear, to deter attack by another state. It is used especially in criminal law and military contexts. It is preceded by verbs such as *create*, *guarantee*, *maintain*, *require*, *select*; modified by adjectives such as *absolute*, *dynamic*, *effective*, *massive*, *strategic*; followed by nouns such as *burglary*, *entry*, *smoking*, *theft*, and so on. In (2b), the noun *determent* means ‘the general result of deterring’. *Determent* is a means of preventing something from happening. It is preceded by verbs like *consider*, *constitute*, *discuss*, *enhance*, *stimulate*; modified by adjectives like *basic*, *main*, *major*, *potential*, *primary*; followed by nouns like *devices*, *methods*, *policy*, *steps*, *tactics*, and so on.

## Exercise 9.2

Below are nominal pairs which differ in meaning and choice of suffixes. For each one, construct an example in which it can be exclusively employed.

- |               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| 1. appraisal  | ----- |
| appraisement  | ----- |
| 2. toleration | ----- |
| tolerance     | ----- |

### 9.1.3 State vs. status

The suffixes *-ce* and *-cy* are attached to same adjectival roots to form nominal pairs. They highlight the apparent features of an entity in the domain of **characterization**, but they are not alike in meaning. The suffix *-ce* highlights the condition that an entity is in at a given moment. In virtue of this, it means ‘being in the state labelled by the root’. As evidence, *-ce* derivatives are modified by adjectives denoting quality as in *total dependence*, and verbs denoting endurance, indication or protection. By contrast, the suffix *-cy* highlights the status, the relative position or standing, of an entity. In virtue of this, it means ‘being in the status labelled by the root’. As evidence, *-cy* derivatives are modified by adjectives denoting nationality as in *British dependency*, quantity as in *major/minor dependency*, and verbs denoting acquisition, management or termination. This distinction is illustrated by the nominal pair below.

- (3)   belligerence vs. belligerency
- a. She could not fathom or tolerate his open *belligerence*.
  - b. The constitution renounces the *belligerency* of a state.

The two nouns under (3) are derived from the adjectival root *belligerent*, which means ‘wishing to fight or argue’. Even so, construal confines them to distinct uses. In (3a), the noun *belligerence* means ‘the state of being belligerent’. *Belligerence* is a warlike attitude or hostile nature. *Belligerence* is preceded by verbs like *approve*, *bear*, *stand*, *sustain*, *tolerate*; adjectives like *childish*, *open*, *sinful*, *vicious*, *wicked*; followed by of plus nouns like *message*, *remark*, *response*, *style*, and so on. In (3b), the noun *belligerency* means ‘the status of being belligerent’. A *belligerency* is a country that is at war. *Belligerency* is preceded by verbs like *abandon*, *end*, *oppose to*, *renounce*, *terminate*; adjectives like *audacious*, *foolhardy*, *illegal*, *reckless*, *unlawful*; adjectives of nationality like *Cuban*, *Indian*, *Korean*, *Portuguese*, *Sudanese*, and so on.

Exercise 9.3

The first members of the following nominal pairs denote state, whereas the second ones denote status. Devise tests, like the use of plural, determiner and existential *there*, to argue that the pair members are different in behaviour.

1. dependence -----  
   dependency -----
2. emergence -----  
   emergency -----

9.1.4 Trait vs. mode

The suffixes *-ness* and *-ity* are appended to same adjectival roots to form nominal pairs. They underline the inherent features of an entity in the domain of **characterization**, but they are not interchangeable in use. The suffix *-ness* underlines trait, the feature that defines the nature of an entity. It means ‘describing the trait indicated by the root’. Derivatives in *-ness* seem to collocate with verbs denoting possession as in have falseness, deprivation as in lack acuteness, or disapproval as in criticise laxness. As for adjectival collocates, they seem to denote quality as in vivid falseness, or type as in moral laxness. By contrast, the suffix *-ity* underlines mode, the feature that defines the manner of an entity. It means ‘describing the mode indicated by the root’. Derivatives in *-ity* seem to collocate with verbs denoting reflection as in demonstrate falsity, perception as in note acuity, or experience as in suffer laxity. As for adjectival collocates, they seem to denote classification as in visual acuity, or degree as in heightened sensitivity. This distinction is reflected in the nominal pair below.

- (4) acuteness vs. acuity
- a. *Acuteness* of observation helps to detect mistakes.
- b. Doctors examine the visual *acuity* of the newborn.

The two nouns under (4) are derived from the adjectival root *acute*, which means ‘keen in perception or sharp in thought’. Still, construal assigns them discrete roles. In (4a), the noun *acuteness* means ‘the trait of being acute’. It means the observation is very good, accurate and quick to notice things. *Acuteness* is preceded by verbs like *lack*, *need*, *own*, *possess*, *require*; adjectives like *connate*, *especial*, *innate*, *native*, *natural*; followed by *of* plus nouns like

*argument, conception, debate, inquiry, observation*, and so on. In (4b), the noun *acuity* means ‘the mode of being acute’. It means the doctor wants to check the ability of the baby to see accurately and clearly. *Acuity* is preceded by verbs like *cultivate, develop, improve, increase, raise*; adjectives like *auditory, hearing, psychological, rhythmic, visual*; followed by *of* plus nouns like *eyesight, senses*, and so on.

## Exercise 9.4

Fill the gap with an appropriate verbal or adjectival collocation which precedes the members of the following nominal pairs.

1. ----- crudeness  
----- crudity
2. ----- laxness  
----- laxity

### 9.1.5 Trait vs. existent

The suffixes *-ness* and *-ity* are added to same adjectival roots to form nominal pairs. They underscore the inherent features of an entity in the domain of **characterization**, but they are not identical in meaning. The suffix *-ness* underscores the trait that characterizes an entity, but the suffix *-ity* underscores the entity itself. More precisely, the suffix *-ity* refers to an existent, a living thing, especially one conceived of as real, not imaginary. Accordingly, it means ‘naming the entity indicated by the root’. As evidence, the majority of *-ness* nouns are non-countable, whereas *-ity* nouns frequently occur as count nouns since they denote an entity. Only the *-ity* seems congruous with the use of words like *very* and *doubt*, which makes it clear that existence is the question as in *Its very tangibility/\*tangibleness is in doubt*. Derivatives in *-ness* follow verbs of assessment as in *assess rareness*, whereas derivatives in *-ity* follow verbs of featuring as in *become a rarity*. This distinction is shown by the nominal pair below.

- (5) oddness vs. oddity
  - a. She resents the *oddness* of her friend.
  - b. Well, a man over seven feet tall is an *oddity*.

The two nouns under (5) are derived from the adjectival root *odd*, which means ‘peculiar, unusual or out of the ordinary’. Yet, construal specifies their

missions in usage. In (5a), the noun *oddness* means ‘the trait of being odd’. It means the friend is strange or unpredictable. *Oddness* is preceded by verbs like *deprecate*, *disapprove*, *frown*, *object*, *resent*; adjectives like *apparent*, *monumental*, *profound*, *sheer*, *unnatural*, and so on. In (5b), the noun *oddity* means ‘the entity is odd’. An *oddity* is a person or thing that is strange or unusual. *Oddity* is preceded by verbs like *observe*, *notice*, *perceive*, *recognise*, *watch*; adjectives like *coincidental*, *historical*, *physical*, *psychological*, *statistical*, and so on.

Exercise 9.5

The following nominal pairs seem to have the same structure. However, if we try to replace the suffixes, the results are not the same. What type of construal do the suffixes suggest?

- 1. rareness -----  
rarity -----
- 2. realness -----  
reality -----

9.1.6 Territory vs. position

The suffixes *-dom* and *-ship* make nominal pairs from the same nominal roots. They delineate mainly individual entities in the domain of **representation**. There is, nevertheless, a discrepancy in their usage. The suffix *-dom* focuses on the territory, area or sphere where one lives or works. It can, thus, be glossed as ‘the territory ruled by the entity specified by the root’. This sense can be substantiated by the accompanying collocates. Derived nouns in *-dom* collocate with verbs expressing construction or maintenance, adjectives expressing size or quality, and nouns expressing headquarters or institutions. Syntactically, such derived nouns accept prepositions of place like *in the kingdom*. By contrast, the suffix *-ship* focuses on the position, rank or job which one holds. It can, thus, be glossed as ‘the position of being the thing signalled by the root’. This sense can be validated by the adjacent collocates. Derived nouns in *-ship* collocate with verbs expressing acquisition or practice, adjectives expressing importance or duration and nouns expressing duties or rights. Syntactically, such derived nouns accept prepositions of time like *during the kingship*. To understand the distinction, consider the nominal pair below.

- (6) chiefdom vs. chiefship
- a. Each section of the *chiefdom* is ruled by a chief.
  - b. She obtained the *chiefship* despite her wild past.

The two nouns under (6) are derived from the nominal root *chief*, which means ‘a person with the highest rank in a company or an organization’. Despite that, construal keeps them separate in usage. In (6a), the noun *chiefdom* means ‘the territory where one is a chief’. It is the dominion or state controlled by a chief. *Chiefdom* is preceded by verbs like *build*, *construct*, *divide*, *end*, *reform*; adjectives like *immense*, *minor*, *newly-created*, *spacious*, *tiny*; followed by nouns like *authorities*, *bases*, *centres*, *headquarters*, *institutions*, and so on. In (6b), the noun *chiefship* means ‘the position of being a chief’. It is the duty or function of a chief. *Chiefship* is preceded by verbs like *attain*, *earn*, *obtain*, *secure*, *win*; adjectives like *brief*, *current*, *momentary*, *paramount*, *ultimate*; followed by nouns like *chore*, *duty*, *errand*, *job*, *work*, and so on.

## Exercise 9.6

The nominal pairs below take the same root, but they reflect different conceptualizations. State the different conceptualizations which the suffixes make.

1. earldom -----  
   earlship -----
2. kingdom -----  
   kingship -----

### 9.1.7 Condition vs. position

The suffixes *-hood* and *-ship* make nominal pairs from the same nominal roots. They sketch out largely individual entities in the domain of **representation**. There is, nonetheless, a difference in their distribution. The suffix *-hood* lays emphasis on the condition which one goes through. Accordingly, it is defined as ‘the condition of being the thing referred to by the root’. This sense can be corroborated by the neighbouring collocates. Nouns derived by means of *-hood* collocate with verbs expressing experience or demonstration, adjectives describing character or personality and nouns expressing concept or essence. Syntactically, such derived nouns are considered uncountable. By contrast, the suffix *-ship* lays emphasis on the duty which one does or the status which

one has. Accordingly, it is defined as ‘the position of being the thing signalled by the root’. This sense can be verified by the accompanying collocates. Nouns derived by means of *-ship* collocate with verbs expressing acquisition or practice, adjectives expressing grace or intelligence and nouns expressing affection or responsibility. Syntactically, such derived nouns are considered countable. To make the distinction plain, let us examine the nominal pair below.

- (7) fatherhood vs. fathership  
 a. The prospect of *fatherhood* is a lifelong responsibility.  
 b. The old man provides a *fathership* for the orphan boy.

The two nouns under (7) are derived from the nominal root *father*, which means ‘a male parent’. However, construal draws a boundary between them in usage. In (7a), the noun *fatherhood* means ‘the condition of being a father’. It is the qualities that befit a father. *Fatherhood* is preceded by verbs like *become*, *conceive*, *display*, *experience*, *imagine*; adjectives like *dubious*, *early*, *fulfilled*, *joyful*, *lovely*; followed by nouns like *concept*, *event*, *idea*, *matter*, *prospect*, and so on. In (7b), the noun *fathership* means ‘the position of being a father’. It is the high social status given to a man. *Fathership* is preceded by verbs like *embody*, *furnish with*, *lavish on*, *provide*, *symbolise*; adjectives like *affectionate*, *compassionate*, *holy*, *sympathetic*, *tender*; followed by nouns like *affection*, *care*, *devotion*, *love*, *passion*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.7

Supply a suitable suffix to fill each gap in the following nominal pairs, making use of the semantic distinctions given.

- |             |       |     |          |       |                     |
|-------------|-------|-----|----------|-------|---------------------|
| 1. queen    | ----- | vs. | queen    | ----- | condition-position  |
| 2. prince   | ----- | vs. | prince   | ----- | territory-condition |
| 3. bachelor | ----- | vs. | bachelor | ----- | condition-belief    |
| 4. attorney | ----- | vs. | attorney | ----- | position-doctrine   |
| 5. citizen  | ----- | vs. | citizen  | ----- | position-body       |

### 9.1.8 Specific vs. generic

The suffixes *-ant* and *-er* build pairs of agent nouns from the same verbal roots. They single out performance in the domain of **agenthood**. Nonetheless, each

has its own nugget of meaning. The suffix *-ant* focuses on a technical field or a specialized subject. The suffix *-ant* can, thus, be glossed as ‘a person who performs the specific action signalled by the root’. As evidence, personal nouns ending in *-ant* collocate with words used in law or in contexts having a methodical or systematic tinge. By comparison, the suffix *-er* focuses on a non-technical field or a generic context. The suffix *-er* can, thus, be glossed as ‘a person who performs the generic action labelled in the root’. As evidence, personal nouns ending in *-er* collocate with words used in a general environment, or in contexts having a normal or casual tinge. To clarify the distinction, see the nominal pair below.

- (8) defendant vs. defender
  - a. The *defendant* has been accused of a petty crime.
  - b. She has finally found a *defender* of her viewpoints.

The two personal nouns under (8) involve the verbal root *defend*, which means ‘to protect someone or something from harm or against attack’. However, construal divides between them in usage. In (8a), the personal noun *defendant* means ‘a person who performs the specific action of defending’. A *defendant* is a person who is required to defend a legal charge in a court of law. It collocates with nouns like *conviction*, *crime*, *evidence*, *hearing*, *trial*; adjectives like *arraigned*, *convicted*, *culpable*, *guilty*, *indicted*; verbs used in the passive like *acquitted*, *charged*, *convicted*, *released*, *sued*, and so on. In (8b), the personal noun *defender* means ‘a person who performs the generic action of defending’. A *defender* is a person who defends someone or somewhere against attack. It collocates with nouns like *faiths*, *policies*, *rights*, *sports*, *viewpoints*; adjectives like *devoted*, *gallant*, *heroic*, *loyal*, *staunch*; verbs like *guard*, *maintain*, *protect*, *support*, *uphold*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.8

The following nominal pairs evoke agenthood. At first glance, they appear to be similar, but they represent different types of construal. Write the context in which it would be natural to use each noun.

- 1. informant -----  
    informer -----
- 2. occupant -----  
    occupier -----



### 9.1.9 Potential vs. actual

The suffixes *-er* and *-ee* build pairs of agent nouns from the same verbal roots. They denote performance in the domain of **agenthood**. Nevertheless, each emphasizes a different aspect of it. The suffix *-er* lays emphasis on the potential aspect of performance. The agent intends to perform an action, or looks forward to an upcoming event. Accordingly, the suffix *-er* means ‘a person who may perform the action labelled in the root’. As evidence, personal nouns ending in *-er* collocate with events of generic nature or contexts implying future events. By contrast, the suffix *-ee* lays emphasis on the actual aspect of performance. The agent has already performed the action, or is engaged in performing it. Accordingly, the suffix *-ee* means ‘a person who has performed the action named by the root’. As evidence, personal nouns ending in *-ee* collocate with events of specific nature or contexts implying past events. To account for the distinction, look at the nominal pair below.

- (9) attender vs. attendee
- a. He is a regular *attender* of all craft exhibitions.
  - b. She was registered as an *attendee* of the seminar.

The two personal nouns under (9) encompass the verbal root *attend*, which means ‘to go to or be present at an event’. However, construal separates them in usage. In (9a), the personal noun *attender* means ‘a person who may perform the action of attending’. An *attender* is a person who may attend an event. It patterns with noun collocates like *ceremony, exhibition, gallery, meeting, party*; adjective collocates like *assiduous, constant, frequent, persistent, regular*, and so on. In (9b), the personal noun *attendee* means ‘a person who has performed the action of attending’. An *attendee* is a person who has attended an event. It patterns with noun collocates like *conference, course, lecture, seminar, tutorial*; adjective collocates like *current, former, one-time, matriculated, registered*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.9

The following nominal pairs evoke agenthood. The roots have the property of allowing two suffixes. Name the context in which each noun is permissible.

- |             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| 1. escaper  | ----- |
| escapee     | ----- |
| 2. returner | ----- |
| returnee    | ----- |

### 9.1.10 Inventive vs. implementive

The suffixes *-ist* and *-ian* build pairs of agent nouns from the same nominal roots. They evoke speciality in the domain of **agenthood**. Even so, each singles out a discrete aspect of it. The suffix *-ist* describes someone as inventing a new concept or originating a novel idea. The suffix *-ist* can, hence, be defined as ‘a person who is versed in the knowledge field indicated by the root’. As evidence, personal nouns ending in *-ist* collocate with nouns like *biology*, *education*, *military*, *politics*, or *theology*, and adjectives denoting creativity. By contrast, the suffix *-ian* describes someone as implementing a concept or pursuing an activity. The suffix *-ian* can, hence, be defined as ‘a person who is devoted to the knowledge field referred to the root’. As evidence, personal nouns ending in *-ian* collocate with words used in religion like *books*, *ceremonies*, *doctrines* and *teachings*; words used in art like *painting*, *drawing* and *sculpture*, and adjectives denoting assiduity. To clarify the distinction, let us examine the nominal pair below.

- (10)    historicist vs. historian
- a. She was a pioneer *historicist* who argued for idealism.
- b. She used to be an amateur *historian* of medieval art.

The two personal nouns under (10) represent the nominal root *history*, which means ‘the branch of knowledge that deals with past events’. However, construal demarcates them in usage. In (10a), the personal noun *historicist* means ‘a person who is versed in the field of history’. A *historicist* is a person who believes natural laws govern historical events which in turn determine social and cultural phenomena. It frequently associates with nouns and verbs derived from them like *argument*, *conception*, *formulation*, *proposition*, *theory*; adjectives like *ace*, *consummate*, *expert*, *pioneer*, *versed*, and so on. In (10b), the personal noun *historian* means ‘a person who is devoted to the field of history’. A *historian* is a person who studies or writes about history, one who compiles a chronological record of historical events. It frequently

associates with nouns like *art, family, space travel, theatre, war*; adjectives like *amateurish, inexperienced, nonprofessional, novice, unskilled*; verbs like *compile, collect, describe, record, trace*, and so on.

Exercise 9.10

The following nominal pairs represent distinctions in agenthood. For each one, give a suitable definition using the semantic clues provided.

- |              |                |       |
|--------------|----------------|-------|
| 1. theorist  | (inventive)    | ----- |
| theoretician | (implementive) | ----- |
| 2. copier    | (mechanical)   | ----- |
| copyist      | (inventive)    | ----- |

## 9.2 Distinctions symbolized by adjectival suffixes

A pair of adjectives can be derived from the same root by means of suffixes belonging to any domain. This is due to the polysemous nature of the root. Even though the adjectives look alike, they have different meanings. The difference in meaning between them resides in the construal imposed on their content. **Construal** is a mental operation which allows the speaker to conceptualize a situation in different ways and choose the appropriate suffixes to represent them in discourse. Precisely, the difference is triggered by the difference in perspective which the speaker takes of the scene. **Perspective** is the viewpoint imposed on a scene which changes relative to the speaker's intention or the requirement of the discourse. Each adjective has its own meaning which is signalled by its root plus the particular suffix attached to it. For its part, each suffix correlates with a particular aspect of the meaning of the root. Below are details of the semantic distinctions and the rival suffixes which represent them.

### 9.2.1 Agentive vs. patientive

The suffixes *-ive/-ory* and *-able/-ible* are used to form adjectival pairs from common verbal roots. They activate the domain of **voice**, but they are not compatible for they fulfil separate functions. A look at the utterances in which

they occur displays prime facts about their uses. The suffix *-ive* focuses on agenthood, and means ‘performing or tending to perform the action referred to in the root’. By contrast, the suffix *-able* focuses on patientivity, and means ‘capable of undergoing the action referred to in the root’. Collocations of adjectives ending in *-ive* refer prototypically to humans and their actions or to entities that are metaphorically ascribed human properties, all of which confirm the agenthood that the suffix stands for. By contrast, collocations of adjectives ending in *-able* refer prototypically to objects that can be manipulated, hence confirming the non-agenthood that the suffix stands for. Let us examine this distinction in an adjectival pair such as the one below:

- (11) curative vs. curable
- a. Do you believe in the *curative* powers of the local mineral water?
  - b. Tuberculosis which once killed many is today completely *curable*.

The two adjectives are derived from the verbal root *cure*, which means ‘to make someone healthy again, or to make an illness disappear’. Due to construal, they are different in usage. In (11a), the adjective *curative* means ‘tending to heal disease’. A *curative power* is able to cure a disease or cause it to get better. *Curative* is associated with nouns referring to medication such as *medicament, medicine, drug, herb, flower*; treatment such as *care, healing, regimen, remedy, therapy*; natural means such as *powers of baths/hot springs/mineral water*, and so on. In (11b), the adjective *curable* means ‘capable of being healed’. A *curable illness* is able to be healed, that is, remediable. *Curable* is associated with nouns referring to types of diseases such as *cancer, diabetes, measles, tuberculosis, whooping cough*; worried feelings such as *anxiety, concern, strain, stress, worry*; unreasonable interests in something such as *fascination, fetish, fixation, mania, obsession*; improper habits such as *addiction, dependence, gambling, stake, wager*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.11

What substance do the suffixes add to the semantics of the following adjectival pairs?

- 1. expressive -----
- expressible -----
- 2. explicatory -----
- explicable -----

### 9.2.2 Self- vs. other-imposed

The suffixes *-ive* and *-ory* are used to form adjectival pairs from common verbal roots. They signify agenthood in the domain of **voice**, but each has its own shade of meaning. A study of the contexts in which they occur yields significant observations about their uses. The suffix *-ive* describes an action that an agent initiates and imposes on the self, which no one else has directed him or her to accept. Accordingly, the suffix *-ive* means ‘performing an action at one’s own discretion’. By contrast, the suffix *-ory* describes an action that an agent initiates and imposes on others, which they have to accept because it is a rule or a regulation. Accordingly, the suffix *-ory* means ‘performing an action at someone else’s discretion’. With the suffix *-ive*, the action imposed affects an individual, whereas with the *-ory* it affects a group of people. Nouns following adjectives ending in *-ive* refer most often to human beings, or their behaviour, abilities and passions. By contrast, nouns following adjectives ending in *-ory* refer most often to official rules, regulations of institutions and systems for organizing activities. Consider this distinction in an adjectival pair such as the one below:

- (12) compulsive vs. compulsory
- a. He suffers from the addictive disease of *compulsive* gambling.
  - b. There are external exams at the end of *compulsory* schooling.

The two adjectives are derived from the verbal root *compel*, which means ‘to force someone to do something’. Due to construal, they go separate ways in usage. In (12a), the adjective *compulsive* means ‘tending to compel’. *Compulsive gambling* is behaviour that is difficult to stop or control; the compulsion is due to behavioural factors. The majority of the collocates of *compulsive* relate to behaviour such as *drinking*, *(over)eating*, *gambling*, *shopping*, *(over)spending*; agent nouns derived from such behaviour such as *drinker*, *(over)eater*, *gambler*, *shopper*, *(over)spender*; simple nouns implying inner drives such as *ambition*, *desire*, *longing*, *need*, *urge*, and so on. In (12b), the adjective *compulsory* means ‘tending to compel’. *Compulsory schooling* is something children are obliged to do because it is law; the compulsion is due to statutory factors. The majority of the collocates of *compulsory* relate to education such as *classes*, *courses*, *exams*, *schooling*, *subjects*; regulations at workplaces such as *back protector*, *safety checks*, *safety measures*, *safety precautions*, *seat belts*; unemployment such as *dismissal*, *lay off*, *redundancy*, *sacking*, *suspension*, and so on.

## Exercise 9.12

In each of the following adjectival pairs, identify the semantic principle that legitimizes the occurrence of the suffix.

- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. contributive   | ----- |
| contributory      | ----- |
| 2. discriminative | ----- |
| discriminatory    | ----- |

### 9.2.3 Narrow vs. broad

The suffixes *-able* and *-ible* are used to form adjectival pairs from common roots. They signal patientivity in the domain of **voice**, but each is used in a different context. A survey of their distribution produces interesting remarks about their use. Although both mean ‘capable of undergoing the action referred to in the root’, they differ with respect to the scope of application, which can be either narrow or broad. A narrow application is one in which the adjective has a more restricted sense. Morphologically, it is represented by the suffix *-able*. A broad application is one in which the adjective has a more general sense. Morphologically, it is represented by the suffix *-ible*. Interestingly, adjectives ending in *-able* are mostly negated with *un-*, whereas adjectives ending in *-ible* are mostly negated with *in-* and its variants *il-*, *im-* or *ir-*. Notice this distinction in an adjectival pair such as the one below:

- (13)    accessible vs. accessible
- a. The computer file is readily *accessible* to all.
  - b. The town is easily *accessible* by rail network.

The two adjectives are derived from the root *access*. Due to construal, they are divergent in usage. In (13a), the adjective *accessible* is derived from the verb *access* and means ‘capable of being accessed’. An *accessible file* is one that can be obtained or used by the users. *Accessible* has a restricted sense in that it is most often associated with the field of computing such as *internet*, *search engine*, *server*, *web page*, *website*, and so on. In (13b), the adjective *accessible* is derived from the noun *access* and means ‘capable of being accessed’. An *accessible town* is one that is easy to reach or get into. *Accessible* has a more general sense in that it appears before nouns denoting place such as *city*, *destination*,

*forest, site, town*; objects such as *book, dictionary, material, pattern, style*; people such as *author, caregiver, lecturer, novelist, therapist*, and so on.

Exercise 9.13

The following roots allow two adjectival suffixes. Construct contexts in which only one suffix is permitted.

1. collectable

collectible
2. extendable

extendible

9.2.4 Cause vs. effect

The suffixes *-ing* and *-ed* are used to form adjectival pairs from common verbal roots. They activate cause and effect in the domain of **voice**, but each has a nuance of its own. A rake through their occurrences gives interesting pieces of information about them. The suffix *-ing* describes the cause or the reason which produces an effect. It has the meaning ‘causing the action referred to in the root’. The suffix *-ed* describes the effect or the result towards which the cause is directed. It has the meaning ‘affected by the action referred to in the root’. This shows that both the *-ing* present participle and the *-ed* past participle can be used as adjectives. Most often, the verbal roots are verbs of emotion. They imply both positive and negative emotion. This type of distinction is highlighted by an adjectival pair like the one below:

- (14)   amusing vs. amused
- a. The story is *amusing* for the child.

b. The child is *amused* by the story.

The two adjectives are derived from the verbal root *amuse*, which means ‘to make someone laugh or smile’. Though similar in root, they have individual meanings. In (14a), the present participle *amusing* means ‘causing amusement’. An *amusing story* is pleasantly entertaining, exciting the risible faculty or tickling the fancy. The concordances of *amusing* show that it is used with concrete nouns such as *book, film, manual, portrait, shop*; abstract nouns such as *criticism, custom, incident, life, situation*; spoken or written language such as *gag, joke, pun, story, tale*; people but rarely, and so on. In (14b), the past participle *amused* means ‘affected by amusement’. An *amused child* is

entertained or made happy. The concordances of *amused* show that it is used with people such as *companion, founder, husband, observer, queen*; human facial reactions such as *expression, glance, grin, look, smile*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.14

The following adjectival pairs end in *-ing* and *-ed*, but they are not equal in meaning. Provide sentences to substantiate the claim.

1. annoying -----  
   annoyed -----
2. exciting -----  
   excited -----

## 9.2.5 Ordinary vs. technical

On some common verbal roots, the suffixes *-ive* and *-ant* form adjectival pairs. They activate the domain of **aspect**. They mean either ‘apt to do the action signified by the root’, or ‘liable to do the act signified by the root’. Yet, each has its own individual usage. Collocations show that the suffix *-ive* is used more in ordinary contexts and stresses acts that apply to both animate and inanimate entities, whereas the suffix *-ant* is used more in technical contexts and focuses on embodied properties expressed by names of professions or substances. When applied to professions, the property is acquired through learning or training. When applied to substances, the property exists as a natural part of the thing described. Adjectives in *-ive* are used before or after nouns, whereas those in *-ant* are used before nouns only. Nouns following adjectives in *-ive* refer to human beings, language materials and ways of expressing them, or establishments and places operated by human beings. Nouns following adjectives in *-ant* refer to specialized contexts such as architecture, music, psychology, physics, pharmacy or the military. This type of distinction is illustrated by an adjectival pair like the one below:

- (15) combative vs. combatant
- a. The boss conducted the meeting in a *combative* style.
  - b. Many *combatant* units were deployed to control the city.

The two adjectives are derived from the verbal root *combat*, which means ‘to fight or struggle, especially between opposing individuals or forces’. Even though they attach to the same root, they are distinctive in use. In (15a),



the adjective *combative* means 'apt to combat'. A *combative style* is a style that is apt to fight or argue. *Combative* is reserved for general contexts: language matters such as *expression, prose, rhetoric, speech, verse*; ways of expressing them such as *approach, form, manner, mode, style*; people such as *boss, minister, official, speaker, spokesman*, their disposition such as *attitude, mood, spirit, temper, urge*, and so on. In (15b), the adjective *combatant* means 'apt to combat'. A *combatant unit* is a unit that is apt to take part in active fighting, as distinguished from the non-combatant units of the medical or the commissariat staff. *Combatant* is reserved for specific contexts, terms used in the military such as *armies, battalions, forces, troops, units*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.15

In each of the adjectival pairs below, the suffix used is at odds with the construal of the sentence. For each one, write the correct suffix.

1. a. He became the \*executant dean of the medical school in 1985. -----  
    b. He began his career as an \*executive architect of country houses. -----
2. a. The television service will be fully \*operant again in September. -----  
    b. In \*operative learning, the animal examined is free to respond. -----
3. a. After the news, she sat alone in a \*reflectant attitude of mind. -----  
    b. The window is made from a single pane of \*reflective glass. -----
4. a. It is possible that a tax cut may have some \*stimulant effect. -----  
    b. The patient was prescribed a drug with a \*stimulative property. -----

## 9.2.6 Vice vs. virtue

Some adjectival pairs can be formed from same nominal roots by means of the suffixes *-ish* and *-like*. Both mean 'having the character of the thing specified by the root' in the domain of **evaluation**, but with a difference seen in terms of vice versus virtue. The suffix *-ish* picks out the vicious characteristics of the thing denoted in the root. It is used to designate disagreeable traits. It means. The suffix *-like* picks out the virtuous characteristics of the thing denoted in the root. It is used to designate attractive traits. A review of their collocations results in interesting findings. Adjectives ending in *-ish* characterize people with attention placed on their misdemeanour and uneasy feelings. As evidence, such adjectives can only combine with other adjectives having negative denotations, as in *Stop being silly and childish*. Also, such adjectives may co-occur with *rather*. By contrast, adjectives ending in *-like* characterize people, highlighting their general qualities of goodness. As evidence,

such adjectives can only combine with other adjectives having positive denotations, as in *She is honest and childlike*. The adjectival pair below serves to prove this distinction:

- (16) childish vs. childlike
- a. None of his friends tolerate his *childish* outbreaks of temper.
  - b. At 85, she retains a *childlike* curiosity about her environment.

The two adjectives are derived from the nominal root *child*, ‘a boy or girl from the time of birth until he or she is an adult’. Despite similarity in root, they are used discriminately. In (16a), the adjective *childish* means ‘having the character of a child’. A person who is childish is immature, irrational and impatient. *Childish* collocates with nouns referring to people; vices such as *bewilderment*, *hostility*, *impatience*, *spite*, *temper*; misdemeanour such as *bickering*, *gestures*, *giggling*, *prank*, *tantrum*; activities such as *drawings*, *games*, *handwriting*, *stunts*, *writing*, and so on. In (16b), the adjective *childlike* means ‘having the character of a child’. A person who is childlike is innocent, fresh and honest. *Childlike* collocates with nouns referring to people; virtues such as *curiosity*, *delight*, *energy*, *enthusiasm*, *frankness*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.16

Using the following adjectival pairs, write how the suffix contributes to the interpretation of each word.

1. owlsh -----  
   owl-like -----
2. sheepish -----  
   sheep-like -----

## 9.2.7 Circumspect vs. imprudent

Some adjectival pairs can be formed from same nominal roots by means of the suffixes *-ous* and *-some*. Both imply ‘causing or inspiring the thing denoted by the root’ in the domain of **possession**, but they differ in terms of circumspect versus imprudent. The suffix *-ous* stands for circumspection, a condition in which people consider the circumstances and consequences of their actions. It stresses the nature or character of the thing being described. It may or may not imply indiscretion. The suffix *-some* stands for imprudence, a condition in which people fail to consider the likely results of their actions. It emphasizes

the action or tendency towards the thing being described. It implies only indiscretion. An investigation of their occurrences shows that adjectives ending in *-ous* accept nouns denoting exciting but dangerous undertakings, whereas adjectives ending in *-some* accept nouns denoting perilous and improper activities. As evidence, adjectives ending in *-ous* combine with adjectives having positive denotations, as in *He is active, keen and adventurous*, whereas adjectives ending in *-some* combine with adjectives having negative denotations, as in *He is rash, reckless and adventuresome*. Of the two, only *adventuresome* takes *rather*. This distinction is shown by examining an adjectival pair such as the following:

- (17) adventurous vs. adventuresome
  - a. The *adventurous* manoeuvre of the staff secured the firm profits.
  - b. They don't like drivers to be so *adventuresome* as to wreck cars.

The two adjectives are derived from the nominal root *adventure*, 'an exciting experience in which dangerous or unusual things happen'. Although they share the same root, they are unequal in use. In (17a), the adjective *adventurous* means 'causing or inspiring adventure'. *An adventurous manoeuvre* is a manoeuvre that is difficult but exciting, carefully planned to obtain an advantage. *Adventurous* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *consultant, journalist, manager, staff, tourist*; proposed methods of doing things such as *approach, design, manoeuvre, plot, scheme*; mental attitudes such as *bent, inclination, mood, outlook, spirit*, and so on. In (17b), the adjective *adventuresome* means 'causing or inspiring adventure'. *An adventuresome driver* is a driver who tends to take high risks, lacking discretion and so putting him at a disadvantage. *Adventuresome* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *climber, diver, driver, hunter, soldier*, or their activities.

Exercise 9.17

The following adjectival pairs illustrate possession. Explain the type of tendency which each suffix represents in the adjective.

- 1. troublous -----  
troublesome -----
- 2. venturous -----  
venturesome -----

### 9.2.8 Essential vs. peripheral

The suffixes *-al* and *-ary* form pairs of adjectives from same nominal roots. Both mean ‘relating closely to the thing named by the root’ in the domain of **relation**, but they differ in terms of essential versus peripheral. The suffix *-al* signals essence, the important parts of something. It pinpoints crucial, fundamental or indispensable constituents. The suffix *-ary* signals periphery, the less important parts of something. It pinpoints introductory, simple or extra constituents. As evidence, adjectives ending in *-al* combine with nouns denoting essence or necessity, whereas adjectives ending in *-ary* combine with nouns denoting simplicity or incompleteness. For example, one can say *elemental and fundamental diet*, but not *elemental and simple diet*. Scouring the data for evidence shows that nouns following adjectives in *-al* revolve around things that are top priorities for humans like nourishment, proof of identity and natural phenomena, whereas nouns following adjectives in *-ary* revolve around things that are secondary for humans like education, entertainment and money. To clarify the contrast, the following adjectival pair is given:

- (18) elemental vs. elementary  
 a. Before surgery, patients receive an *elemental* diet.  
 b. The entrant has *elementary* knowledge of physics.

The two adjectives are derived from the nominal root *element*, ‘a part of a system, plan or piece of writing’. Despite sharing the same root, they are discrete in use. In (18a), the adjective *elemental* means ‘relating closely to element’. An *elemental diet* is a diet that is taken by a person at the most fundamental level. *Elemental* collocates with nouns referring to nourishment such as *diet, drink, food, sustenance, nutrition*; theory such as *analyses, changes, functions, principles, stimuli*; uncontrollable phenomena of nature such as *air, earth, fire and water*; physical powers of nature such as *dynamism, energy, force, impulse, momentum*, and so on. In (18b), the adjective *elementary* means ‘relating closely to element’. *Elementary knowledge* is knowledge that suggests simplicity or self-evidence. *Elementary* collocates with nouns used in the field of education including assessment such as *formula, knowledge, level, mistake, test*; mental exercises such as *exercise, drill, lesson, problem, task*; demands such as *needs, necessity, preconditions, prerequisites, requirements*, and so on.

Exercise 9.18

Based on the distinction made above, consider the following adjectival pairs and state how the suffixes help to interpret them.

1. documental -----  
documentary -----
2. supplemental -----  
Supplementary -----

9.2.9 Hallmark vs. speciality

The suffixes *-ic* and *-ical* form pairs of adjectives from same nominal roots. They evoke the domain of **relation**, but there is a semantic difference understood in terms of hallmark versus speciality. The suffix *-ic* communicates hallmark, a typical characteristic of an entity. It pertains to the important or distinctive property of the combining root. It means ‘pertaining to the typical feature of the thing named by the root’. It is used in figurative senses. The suffix *-ical* communicates speciality, a particular area of knowledge. It pertains to the knowledge field or study subject expressed by the combining noun. It means ‘pertaining to the area of the thing named by the root’. It is confined almost entirely to technical senses. Combining the data for evidence helps one to arrive at important findings. Nouns following adjectives in *-ic* describe people plus their achievements, or events plus their results. Nouns following adjectives in *-ical* describe fields of knowledge, works of art or portions of time. To explicate the distinction, the following adjectival pair is cited:

- (19) classic vs. classical
- a. Paul scored a *classic* goal in the 90th minute.
- b. He has little knowledge of *classical* literature.

The two adjectives are derived from the nominal root *class*, ‘a group into which people or things are put according to their standard’, but they are disparate in use. In (19a), the adjective *classic* means ‘pertaining to the typical feature of class’. A *classic goal* is a goal that is of the first class, highest rank or importance. *Classic* collocates with nouns referring to achievements such as *design, essay, goal, performance, study*; objects such as *album, car, dress, film, picture*; specimens such as *case, example, instance, model, sample*, and so on.

In (19b), the adjective *classical* means ‘pertaining to the area of class’. *Classical literature* is literature that belongs to the ancient Greek and Roman world. *Classical* collocates with nouns used in the domain of entertainment such as *ballet, concert, guitar, music, musician*; ancient arts of Greece and Rome such as *civilisation, culture, drama, literature, myth*; objects of historic interest such as *artefacts, building, city, relic, souvenir*, and so on.

### Exercise 9.19

Below are listed some adjectival pairs ending in *-ic* and *-ical*. Using the distinction made above, devise sentences to clarify the difference.

- |                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| 1. historic    | ----- |
| historical     | ----- |
| 2. philosophic | ----- |
| philosophical  | ----- |
| 3. politic     | ----- |
| political      | ----- |
| 4. tragic      | ----- |
| tragic         | ----- |

## 9.2.10 Substance vs. feature

The suffixes *-en* and *-y* are members of the domain of **resemblance**. They form adjectival pairs on nominal roots. Yet, they are quite disparate in use. The disparity rests on such parameters as substance versus feature. The suffix *-en* conveys substance, the material which a thing can be made of. It means ‘resembling the thing designated by the root in make’. The suffix *-y* conveys feature, a typical quality of something. It ‘resembling the thing designated by the root in quality’. A thorough search of their collocations unearths some new information. Nouns following adjectives in *-en* refer to objects or the material of which they are made. Nouns following adjectives in *-y* refer to smell and taste or vocal utterances or conceptions. In written discourse, adjectives ending in *-en* are usually used attributively, whereas adjectives ending in *-y* are used either attributively or predicatively. To get the distinction on a concrete footing, consider an adjectival pair such as the following:

- (20) earthen vs. earthy
- The hut had an *earthen* floor and a thatched roof.
  - The old cellar was damp and had an *earthy* smell.

The two adjectives are derived from the nominal root *earth*, ‘the land surface of the world as opposed to the sky or sea’, but they are distinguishable in use. In (20a), the adjective *earthen* means ‘resembling earth in make.’ *An earthen floor* is a floor that is made of soil or composed of baked clay. *Earthen* collocates with nouns referring to crockery such as *bowl, cup, pan, plate, saucer*; barriers such as *barricade, dam, floor, rampart, wall*, and so on. In (20b), the adjective *earthy* means ‘resembling earth in quality.’ *An earthy cellar* is a cellar that resembles earth in smell. *Earthy* collocates with nouns referring to smell and taste such as *flavour, odour, scent, smell, taste*; luminosity of colours such as *colour, hue, shade, tinge, tone*; qualities of entities such as *bitterness, glamour, realism, sweetness, wisdom*, and so on.

Exercise 9.20

Consider the following adjectival pairs and then paraphrase what you take the speaker’s intended message to be.

- 1. silken -----  
   silky -----
- 2. waxen -----  
   waxy -----

Summary

In this chapter, I validated the **construal** theory in the semantic description of pairs of words ending with suffixes. By virtue of to this theory, pairs of words sharing the same bases and hosting different suffixes are not considered synonymous even if they are derived from the same sources. The contrast resides in **construal**, a way the speaker conceives and expresses a situation. It resides in the ability of the speaker to conceive a situation in alternate ways and use different morphological units to express them. Although the same base may admit two or more suffixes, the meanings of the resulting derivatives differ. Each suffix highlights a certain facet of a base, and so shapes the overall meaning of the formation. The choice of a suffix is motivated by **perspective**, the viewpoint which the speaker takes of a situation. A pair of words may share the same conceptual content, but differs in terms of the construal imposed on their content. Their interchange is conditional, depending upon the type of construal the speaker employs to describe the situation. Each word is suitable for a particular situation, and so the alternatives available to the speaker are

not treated on an equal footing. Evidence in support of the differences comes from **collocation**, the tendency of words to occur side by side in an utterance.

The semantic distinctions and their representative suffixes are summarized in Table 9.1.

**Table 9.1** The semantic distinctions signalled by suffixes

Construals			
Nominal suffixes		Adjectival suffixes	
Distinctions	Representatives	Distinctions	Representatives
sequential vs. whole	-al vs. -ion	agentive vs. patientive	-ive/-ory vs. -able/-ible
instance vs. type	-ce vs. -ment	self vs. other-imposed	-ive vs. -ory
state vs. status	-ce vs. -cy	narrow vs. broad	-able vs. -ible
trait vs. mode	-ness vs. -ity	cause vs. effect	-ing vs. -ed
trait vs. existent	-ness vs. -ity	ordinary vs. technical	-ive vs. -ant
territory vs. position	-dom vs. -ship	vice vs. virtue	-ish vs. -like
condition vs. position	-hood vs. -ship	circumspect vs. imprudent	-ous vs. -some
specific vs. generic	-ant vs. -er	essential vs. peripheral	-al vs. -ary
potential vs. actual	-er vs. -ee	hallmark vs. speciality	-ic vs. -ical
inventive vs. implementive	-ist vs. -ian	substance vs. feature	-en vs. -y





# Part IV

## Compounding

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Part IV is about the morphology of compounds in English. A **compound** is a structure formed by integrating two substructures, free morphemes. As a productive means of word formation in English, **compounding** is the process of putting together two free morphemes, be they nouns, adjectives or verbs, to make a compound word, a brand-new word. The spelling of compounds has caused heated controversy in the literature. Sometimes, compounds are written as one word. Sometimes, they are written as two hyphenated words. Sometimes, they are written as two separate words. Since this is a matter of formality, it lies beyond the scope of this part. Instead, this part places emphasis on the semantics of compounds. Part IV includes three chapters. Chapter 10 relates to the categorization of compounds. Chapter 11 deals with the grouping of compounds in sets. Chapter 12 pertains to the interpretation of similar-looking compound pairs.

In combining the two substructures of a compound, four valence factors are at work. First, the substructures are affected by two correspondences. Phonologically, the substructure *foot* elaborates the substructure *ball*, which to yield *football*. Semantically, *foot* describes a thing which corresponds to a thing profiled by *ball*. By unifying the two substructures, one obtains the compound structure *football*. Second, the left-hand substructure is qualified as dependent, whereas the right-hand substructure is qualified as autonomous. In *football*, *foot* is dependent, whereas *ball* is autonomous. *Foot* elaborates a salient sub-part within the semantic structure of *ball*, and specifies its type, meaning a ball kicked by the foot. Third, the left-hand substructure acts as a modifier, whereas the right-hand substructure acts as a profile determinant. In *football*, *ball* is the profile determinant of the entire compound structure. *Foot* is describable as one whose profile is overridden by that of *ball*. Fourth, the compound structure is composed as a result of successive integration of its substructures. In *football stadium*, at the first or lower level of constituency, *foot* is integrated with *ball* to form *football*. At the second or higher level, *football* combines with *stadium* deriving the overall expression.

In interpreting the substructures of compounds, two important concepts are at work. One is **compositionality**, the case in which the meaning of a complex expression is computed from the meanings of its component parts. Compositionality is of two types. Under full compositionality, the meaning of a compound structure is fully determined by the meanings of its substructures. For example, the meaning of *a hair pin* is a combination of the meanings of the modifier and the head: a pin used to keep the hair back off the face. Full compositionality represents a case of **endocentricity**, where the meaning of a compound is a specification of the meaning of its head. Under partial compositionality, the meaning of a compound structure is determined by both the semantic contribution of its substructures and the pragmatic knowledge behind what is actually symbolized. For example, *a laptop* is not only a function of the meanings of the modifier and head: the top of the lap, but rather a portable microcomputer suitable for use while travelling. Partial compositionality represents a case of **exocentricity**, where the meaning of a compound is not a specification of the meaning of its head, as it lacks a head or it is not expressed morphologically.

The other concept is **analysability**, the case in which the substructures of a compound structure match up phonetically and semantically. In some cases, compounds are fully analysable. This is the case in which the user is aware of how the phonological substructures match up, one to one, with the semantic substructures. In using a compound structure like *football*, for example, the user is aware of how the components *foot* and *ball* contribute to the phonetic and semantic make-up of its compound structure. In other cases, compounds are partially analysable. This is the case when the compounds are only phonologically, not semantically, analysable. At the phonological level, a compound structure like *skinhead* is quite analysable. The user is aware of the fact that it consists of two phonological substructures. At the semantic level, however, the user is not immediately aware of the contributions made by the substructures. It is not clear if each substructure makes a clear contribution to the compound structure. That is, in *skinhead* the meanings of its parts are not immediately recognizable. *A skinhead* means a young person with a shaved head, often perceived as aggressive and racist.

# Compound Categories

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Chapter 10 explores the role of categorization in the semantic description of English compounds. Applying the cognitive assumption that linguistic items have multiple senses and so form complex categories, it is argued that a compound class forms a network of interrelated senses. The senses exist in the mind of the speaker as a **schema**, a general template which represents the core commonalities of a compound type. The senses, that is, instances, represent elaborations of the template. One sense, described as the **prototype**, serves as an ideal example from which other senses, described as the **periphery**, are derived via semantic extensions. The intention of the chapter is to reveal the numerous instances of a given compound class and provide exact definitions for them. The chapter includes three sections. Section 10.1 tackles noun compounds. Section 10.2 treats adjective compounds. Section 10.3 covers verb compounds. In all the sections, I pursue three steps. First, I pick out the prototypical sense of a compound class. Second, I reveal the marginal senses of a compound class. Third, I supply examples to support the sense definitions.

## 10.1 Noun compounds

A noun compound is a structure that is made up of two free morphemes or lexical substructures. The compound structure is used to express a new idea. The left-hand substructure, which is the modifier (M), can belong to any word class, be it a noun, adjective or verb. The right-hand substructure, which is the profile determinant or head (H), is a noun. The resulting structure is a noun compound, describing a class of a time-stable entity. The term **entity** refers to something that has separate and distinct existence and objective or conceptual reality. The entity schema for a noun compound, which comprises a set of instances, is [-+N], with the slot being filled by items of different word classes. The items represent aspects that are part of the meaning of a noun, whose use depends on the way the speaker views the situation and picks out the right item to modify the noun. The aspects which modify a noun fill in the schema in varying, often contrastive ways. They include source, make, purpose, location, time, comparison, causation and measure.

Prototypically, a noun compound consists of two substructures, both of which are nouns. Depending on the nature of the combining substructures, the noun compounds express such relationships as:

- (a) 'H is part of M'. This sense of belongingness arises when the modifier denotes the whole and the head the part, thus expressing a whole-part relationship. For example, *a house door* is a door that belongs to a house. Examples referring to buildings include *abbey gate*, *chicken breast*, *office floor*, *tower steps*, *window latch*, and so on. Examples referring to body parts include *armpit*, *chest wall*, *eyebrow*, *eyelid*, *leg muscle*, and so on. Examples referring to clothes include *coat collar*, *jacket pockets*, *pant-leg*, *pocket zip*, *shirt sleeve*, and so on. Examples denoting membership include *college staff*, *company board*, *court jury*, *union member*, *university team*, and so on.
- (b) 'M is part of H'. This sense of belongingness emerges when the modifier denotes the part and the head the whole, thus expressing a part-whole relationship. For example, *a flower garden* is a garden of flowers. More examples include *armchair*, *bedroom*, *corn field*, *keyboard*, *parade ground*, *scrap yard*, and so on.
- (c) 'H is made of M'. This sense of make surfaces when the modifier suggests the substance and the head the outcome, thus expressing a source-result relationship. For example, *leather shoes* are shoes made of leather. More examples include *bronze medal*, *cotton socks*, *diamond ring*, *oak chest*, *silver plate*, *wellington boot*, and so on. In some examples, the sense is: 'H is made from M'. For example, *rye whiskey* is whiskey made from fermented rye. Other examples include *carpet bag*, *fur coat*, *rag doll*, *wheat bread*, and so on.
- (d) 'H is used for M'. This sense of purpose appears when the modifier names the goal and the head the instrument to achieve it, thus expressing a goal-instrument relationship. For example, *a teaspoon* is a spoon used for stirring tea. More examples include *kitchen chair*, *gas-mask*, *raincoat*, *sun-glasses*, *table cloth*, *towel rail*, and so on. Examples in which M indicates time are *evening dress*, *nightdress*, *spring suit*, *summer house*, and so on. Examples in which H has the function of M are *buffer state*, *feature film*, *fuel oil*, *houseboat*, *prison camp*, and so on.
- (e) 'M is used for H'. This sense of purpose occurs when the modifier names the instrument by means of which the head, as the goal, is brought about, thus expressing an instrument-goal relationship. For example, *a steam engine* is an engine that uses steam to generate power. More examples include *air gun*, *cable car*, *computer game*, *correspondence course*, *gas stove*, *motor cycle*, and so on.

### Exercise 10.1

Add the correct head in the spaces provided to build noun compounds which are defined by the given explanations.

1. window ----- = a metal bar used for keeping a window closed.
  2. scrap ----- = a place where metal products are sold or reprocessed.
  3. silver ----- = metal that is covered with a thin layer of silver.
  4. towel ----- = a bar or frame on which towels can be hung.
  5. cable ----- = a small carriage travelling up and down mountains.
- (f) 'H holds M'. This sense of purpose follows when the modifier signals the content and the head the container, thus expressing a contained-container relationship. For example, a *water jug* is a jug used for holding water. More examples include *ashtray*, *cake tin*, *coffee pot*, *letter box*, *record cabinet*, *sugar bowl*, and so on.
- (g) 'H is positioned in M'. This sense of location proceeds when the modifier indicates the habitat in which the head is placed, thus expressing a place-object relationship. For example, a *beach house* is a house that is located on the beach. More examples include *airship*, *caveman*, *coast road*, *country lane*, *space station*, *town hall*, and so on. Examples referring to places of work include *army engineer*, *hospital nurse*, *navy captain*, *office clerk*, *school friend*, and so on. Examples of abstract nouns include *country fair*, *dictionary meaning*, *garden party*, *hospital bill*, *laboratory results*, *newspaper story*, and so on.
- (h) 'M is positioned in H'. This sense of location happens when the modifier indicates the object or activity and the head the domicile in which it is positioned, expressing thus an object-place relationship. For example, an *amusement park* is a park in which entertainment takes place. More examples include *battlefield*, *call box*, *caravan site*, *checkpoint*, *fruit market*, *observation post*, and so on.
- (i) 'H is the time for M'. This sense of time applies when the modifier represents the object or activity and the head the period of time in which it takes place, thus expressing an object-time relationship. For example, a *golf season* is the season in which golf is played. More examples include *bonfire night*, *lunar month*, *lunch hour*, *school year*, *summer time*, and so on.
- (j) 'M is the time for H'. This sense of time shows up when the modifier represents the period of time in which the head as object or activity occurs, thus expressing a time-object relationship. For example, a *Sunday paper* is a paper which appears on Sunday. More examples include *afternoon tea*, *day care*, *morning train*, *night shift*, *spring showers*, *weekend guest*, and so on.

## Exercise 10.2

Put in the spaces provided the right modifier to build noun compounds which are defined by the given explanations.

1. ----- tin = a metal container in which you bake a sweet food.
2. ----- ship = a large aircraft filled with gas to make it rise.
3. ----- point = a barrier where vehicles and travellers are inspected.

4. ----- hour = the mid-day time when people stop work to eat.
  5. ----- shift = a period of time at night when people regularly work.
- (k) 'M is the field with which H is concerned'. This sense of activity materializes when the modifier refers to the field or subject with which the head as the actor is concerned, thus expressing a field-actor relationship. For example, a *foreign secretary* is a secretary who is concerned with foreign affairs. Examples of single actors include *bank clerk*, *fireman*, *foreign minister*, *newsman*, *postman*, *probation officer*, and so on. Examples of group actors include *crime syndicate*, *examination board*, *loan association*, *school committee*, *sports commission*, and so on. Examples of organization actors include *business firm*, *fire department*, *job centre*, *phone company*, *post office*, and so on.
- (l) 'H has the feature of M'. This sense of comparison realizes when the modifier elucidates the shape, size, colour, and so on. and the head the object, expressing thus a feature-object relationship. For example, an *egg plant* is a plant that is egg-like in shape. More examples include *bell jar*, *frogman*, *pig eyes*, *pot belly*, *sponge cake*, *umbrella tree*, and so on. Examples in which M is a characteristic feature of H include *dust storm*, *fruit-cake*, *network*, *oil-paint*, *picture book*, and so on.
- (m) 'H causes M'. This sense of causation arises when the modifier signifies the result and the head the cause, thus expressing a result-cause relationship. For example, *tear gas* is gas that makes the eyes water. More examples include *horror film*, *influenza virus*, *love potion*, *smallpox pustule*, *viral infection*, and so on.
- (n) 'M causes H'. This sense of causation emerges when the modifier signifies the cause and the head the result, thus expressing a cause-result relationship. For example, *hay fever* is an illness that is caused by pollen. More examples include *bullet hole*, *cold sore*, *heat rash*, *gas blast*, *traffic jam*, *wind storm*, and so on.
- (o) 'M is a measure of H'. This sense of dimension surfaces when the modifier spells a measurement and the head the object, thus expressing a measurement-object relationship. For example, a *6-inch circle* is a circle that has a diameter of 6 inches. Examples of size include *4-foot fence*, *400-metre track*, *12-acre site*, and so on. Examples of duration include *75-minute programme*, *1-month rest*, *7-week course*, *2-hour strike*, and so on. Examples of value include *twenty pence piece*, *five-pound note*, *two-pound coin*, and so on. Examples of scale include *first-class hotel*, *first-rate care*, *low-class tramp*, *top-grade secretary*, and so on.

## Exercise 10.3

Write a suitable noun compound to fill the blank in each of the following sentences.

1. They appointed a ----- to supervise offenders on probation.
2. She decided to bake a low-sugar ----- for afternoon tea.

3. She took the guests to see a ----- about the Living Dead.
4. The nurse ascribed the itching on his scalp to a -----.
5. The miners' and steel workers' union held a ----- yesterday.

So far, the compounds cited have been endocentric, where the referent of the compound is the same as the referent of one of its constituent parts. Such compounds consist of an explicit head and a modifier whose presence serves to specify the meaning of the head. In a few examples, however, the compounds are exocentric, where the referent of the compound is not the same as the referents of any of its constituent parts. Such compounds are headless; their meanings are not specified by any of their parts but by an external semantic value, which are explained by encyclopaedic knowledge or processes of metonymy and metaphor.

One set of exocentric compounds denotes humans. For example, *a birdbrain* is a stupid person. More examples include *blockhead*, *bonehead*, *brass hat*, *egghead*, *featherbrain*, *lion heart*, *rubberneck*, *skinflint*, and so on. Another set of exocentric compounds denotes animals. For example, *a cottontail* is a rabbit with a white tail, living in North America. More examples include *copperhead*, *cottonmouth*, *hammerhead*, *pronghorn*, *razorback*, *spoonbill*, and so on. A further set of exocentric compounds denotes plants. For example, *a buttercup* is a plant with bright yellow cup-shaped flowers, common as a garden weed and *a foxglove* is a plant with white, yellow, pink or purple flowers shaped like the fingers of gloves. The final set of exocentric compounds denotes objects. For example, *a paperback* is a book bound in flexible covers.

Peripherally, a noun compound consists of two substructures, the modifier is either a verb or an adjective and the head is a noun. Depending on the nature of the combining substructures, the compound expresses such relationships as:

- (a) 'H does the action of M'. This sense comes to attention when the modifier is a verb and the head a noun denoting an object, thus expressing an action-agent relationship. For example, *an alarm clock* is a clock with a bell or buzzer that can be set to sound at a chosen time. Examples of inanimate agents include *grind stone*, *hovercraft*, *swivel seat*, and so on. Examples of animate agents include *call-girl*, *cry baby*, *hangman*, *playboy*, *workman*, and so on.

Thus far, the compounds composed of verbal modifiers and nominal heads have been endocentric, bearing the characteristics of their members. In a few instances, however, the compounds are exocentric, not bearing the characteristics of either



of their members. Some exocentric compounds denote humans. For example, *a cut-throat* is a murderer or a violent criminal. More examples include *daredevil*, *hangdog*, *killjoy*, *pickpocket*, *sawbones*, *scatterbrain*, *spoilsport*, *telltale*, *turncoat*, and so on. Other exocentric compounds denote plants. For example, *a snap-dragon* is a garden plant that is cultivated for its decorative, colourful spikes of flowers. Further exocentric compounds denote objects. For example, *a scarecrow* is an object made to resemble a human figure, set up to scare birds away from a field where crops are growing. Other examples include *breakwater*, *makeshift*, *passport*, and so on.

- (b) 'H has the property of M'. This sense comes to surface when the modifier is an adjective denoting property and the head a noun denoting an object, thus expressing a property-object relationship. For example, *a highchair* is a long-legged chair with a table-like tray used at meal times for children. More examples include *bluefish*, *quicksand*, and so on. Examples in which the head is animate include *gentleman*, *handyman*, *madman*, *strongman*, and so on.

So far, the compounds composed of adjectival modifiers and nominal heads have been endocentric, in which both components participate in the meaning of the compound. Yet, there are some compounds which are exocentric, in which their meanings are difficult to construe from the components. The first set of exocentric compounds denotes humans. For example, *a fathead* is a stupid person. More examples include *dimwit*, *greenhorn*, *highbrow*, *loudmouth*, *low-life*, and so on. The second set of exocentric compounds denotes animals. For example, *a blackhead* is any of several birds with black heads or head markings. More examples include *bluegill*, *golden-eye*, *redbreast*, *yellowhammer*, and so on. The third set of exocentric compounds denotes plants. For example, *a bluebell* is a woodland plant which produces clusters of blue bell-shaped flowers, and *a goldenrod* is a plant with tall spikes of small bright yellow flowers. The final set of exocentric compounds display different meanings. For example, *a hardback* is a book bound in stiff covers. More examples include *greenbelt*, *hardtop*, *straightedge*, and so on.

Exercise 10.4

Paraphrase each of the following noun exocentric compounds, using encyclopaedic knowledge.

- 1. hardtop -----
- 2. highbrow -----
- 3. goldeneye -----
- 4. breakwater -----
- 5. scatterbrain -----

## 10.2 Adjective compounds

An adjective compound is a structure that is composed of two or more free morphemes or lexical substructures. The compound structure is used to describe a new situation or change the modification of an entity. The left-hand substructure, which is the modifier (M), can belong to any word class. The right-hand substructure, which is the profile determinant or head (H), is an adjective. The resulting structure is an adjective compound, denoting a feature. The term **feature** refers to a typical quality or an important aspect of something. The feature schema for an adjective compound, which comprises a set of instances, is [-+Adj], with the slot being filled by items of different word classes. The items represent aspects that are part of the meaning of an adjective, whose use depends on the way the speaker conceptualizes the scene and chooses the right item to modify the adjective. The aspects which modify an adjective enrich the schema with specific details. They include purpose, make, location, privation, affliction, disposition, motion and resemblance.

Prototypically, an adjective compound consists of two substructures, the first of which is a noun. Depending on the nature of the combining substructures, the adjective compounds have such relationships as:

- (a) 'H is the colour of M'. This sense of comparison arises when the modifier is a noun referring to an object and the head is an adjective naming colour, thus expressing an object-colour relationship. For example, *snow-white hair* is hair that is as white as snow. Other examples include *ash-grey face*, *brick-red complexion*, *coal-black eyes*, *sky-blue blouse*, *sun-bright sabre*, and so on.
- (b) 'M is the goal for H'. This sense of purpose emerges when the modifier is a noun representing the goal towards which the adjective as the head is directed, thus expressing a goal-quality relationship. For example, *a peace-eager campaigner* is a campaigner who is eager for peace. Other examples include *class-envious moron*, *cost-effective approach*, *fortune-hungry entrepreneur*, *money-covetous trader*, *profit-thirsty trader*, *user-friendly system*, and so on.
- (c) 'H is the feature of M'. This sense of make surfaces when the modifier is a noun naming the object and the head is an adjective naming its feature, thus expressing an object-feature relationship. For example, *a rock-hard body* is a body that is as hard as rock. Other examples include *crystal-clear lake*, *feather-light touch*, *ice-cold water*, *paper-thin slices*, *razor-sharp blade*, *stone-deaf person*, and so on.
- (d) 'M is the cause for H'. This sense of causation appears when the modifier is a noun signifying the cause and the head is an adjective signifying the effect,

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thus expressing a cause-effect relationship. For example, a *travel-weary motorist* is a motorist who is weary from travel. Other examples include *camera-shy minister*, *crime-guilty plea*, *girl-crazy world*, *oil-rich country*, *travel-sick person*, *water-sick soil*, and so on.

- (e) 'M is the field for H'. This sense of activity occurs when the modifier is a noun signalling the area or field to which the adjective as the head applies, thus expressing a field-application relationship. For example, a *computer-literate employee* is an employee who is knowledgeable in the use of computers. Other examples include *colour-blind bats*, *energy-efficient products*, *machine-readable dictionaries*, and so on.
- (f) 'M is the place for H'. This sense of location follows when the modifier is a noun suggesting the place or the circumstances and the head is an adjective suggesting the characteristic, thus expressing a place-characteristic relationship. For example, an *oceanfront hotel* is a hotel that is situated on the seashore near the ocean. Other examples include *brain-dead patient*, *heartfelt apology*, *seaborne invasion*, *world-famous writer*, *world-wide problem*, and so on.

### Exercise 10.5

Think of a suitable adjective compound to precede the noun in each of the following sentences.

1. She was wearing a ----- blouse that summer afternoon.
  2. ----- traders always talk about the pursuit of money.
  3. He took a dip in a small pool filled with ----- water.
  4. In ----- countries, the standard of living is very high.
  5. He is a ----- scientist still searching for a cancer cure.
- (g) 'M is the measure of H'. This sense of measurement proceeds when the modifier is a noun symbolizing the entity and the head is an adjective symbolizing measurement, thus expressing an entity-measurement relationship. For example, *knee-high stocks* are stocks that reach the knees. Other examples include *mile-long queue*, *shoulder-high wall*, *skin-deep fashion*, *state-wide reform*, *week-long visit*, and so on.
  - (h) 'M is without H'. This sense of privation happens when the modifier is a noun denoting the thing which the adjective as the head, mostly with *-free* and *-less*, denotes its absence, thus expressing a thing-without relationship. For example, a *weed-free garden* is a garden that is without weed. Examples in *-free* include *child-free gathering*, *cloud-free sky*, *meat-free diet*, *queue-free check-in*, *smoke-free city*, *sugar-free tea*, and so on. Examples in *-less* include *boneless fish*, *characterless room*, *flawless performance*, *fruitless tree*, *motherless child*, *spotless house*, and so on.

- (i) 'M is the thing and H its action'. This sense of affliction applies when the modifier is a noun referring to the thing and the adjective as the head, mostly with *-ridden* and *-stricken*, is its action, thus expressing a thing-action relationship. For example, a *drought-ridden area* is an area that is plagued by drought. Examples in *-ridden* include *acne-ridden face*, *crime-ridden city*, *injury-ridden event*, *lice-ridden hair*, *mosquito-ridden swamp*, *plague-ridden village*, and so on. Examples in *-stricken* include *famine-stricken region*, *grief-stricken mother*, *hurricane-stricken coast*, *panic-stricken crowd*, *poverty-stricken area*, *terror-stricken people*, and so on.
- (j) 'M is the thing to which H is disposed'. This sense of disposition shows up when the modifier is a noun referring to the thing towards which the adjective as the head, mostly with *-conscious*, *-minded* and *-prone*, is disposed, thus expressing a thing-inclined relationship. For example, a *dress-conscious teenager* is a teenager who takes an interest in clothes. Examples in *-conscious* include *budget-conscious businessman*, *camera-conscious person*, *garden-conscious housewife*, *health-conscious person*, *weight-conscious model*, and so on. Examples in *minded* include *business-minded official*, *chic-minded person*, *environment-minded activist*, *fashion-minded buyer*, *peace-minded proponent*, *trend-minded people*, and so on. Examples in *-prone* include *accident-prone child*, *failure-prone student*, *gaffe-prone person*, *injury-prone kid*, *mischief-prone child*, *quarrel-prone teenager*, and so on.
- (k) 'M is the destination towards which H moves'. This sense of motion materializes when the modifier is a noun referring to the destination towards which the adjective as the head, mostly with *-bound*, *-based* and *-ward*, moves, thus expressing a destination-moving relationship. For example, an *eastbound train* is a train whose destination is the east. Other examples include *homebound ship*, *Leeds-bound passenger*, *London-bound train*, and so on. In some compounds, the meaning is that of 'dependent on the place expressed by the modifier'. For example, a *chair-bound patient* is a patient dependent on a wheelchair for mobility. Other examples include *fog-bound ship*, *studio-bound programme*, *earth-bound satellite*, and so on. Examples in *-based* include *ground-based telescope*, *land-based missile*, *London-based news agency*, and so on. Examples in *-ward* include *ceiling-ward smoke*, *homeward journey*, *southward walk*, and so on.
- (l) 'M is the thing and H is the type'. This sense of resemblance realizes when the modifier is a noun referring to the thing which the noun as the head, mostly with *-style* and *-type*, refers to its type, thus expressing a thing-similar relationship. For example, a *Beatles-style band* is a band whose music resembles that of the Beatles. Examples in *-style* include *antique-style furniture*, *European-style clothes*, *family-style food*, *French-style perfume*, *German-style car*, *theatre-style ballroom*, and so on. Examples in *-type* include *California-type barbecue*, *circus-type room*, *hospital-type bed*, *London-type jug*, *military-type car*, *Rome-type harrow*, and so on.

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### Exercise 10.6

Match the words in the left and right columns to form new adjective compounds which modify the nouns given.

1. state	bound	-----	reform
2. cloud	conscious	-----	sky
3. weight	wide	-----	model
4. fog	ridden	-----	ship
5. injury	free	-----	event

Peripherally, an adjective compound consists of two substructures, both the modifier and the head being adjectives. Depending on the nature of the combining substructures, the adjective compound expresses the following semantic relationships:

- (a) 'M is a shade of H'. This sense comes to attention when the modifier is an adjective signifying the shade of the colour denoted by the adjectival head, thus expressing a shade-colour relationship. For example, a *dark-blue suit* is a suit which has a dark shade of blue. Other examples include *blue-green water*, *pale-yellow wallpaper*, *red-brown hair*, and so on. In some examples, the modifier is a normal adjective such as *bitter-sweet beer*, *silky-soft skin*, *wide awake baby*, and so on.
- (b) 'M. is the quality and H is the possessor'. This sense comes to surface when the modifier is an adjective signifying quality which the adjectival head, either present or past participle, possesses, thus expressing a quality-possessor relationship. For example, a *kind-hearted man* is a man with a kind heart. Examples of present participles include *beautiful-looking woman*, *far-reaching benefit*, *hard-working student*, *long-lasting friendship*, *quick-dyeing colour*, and so on. Examples of past participles include *blue-eyed man*, *left-handed child*, *old-fashioned system*, *open-minded person*, *red-haired girl*, *right-footed player*, and so on. The modifier can also be a noun, as in *money-saving tips*, *sun-dried bricks*, *tongue-tied lovers*, and so on.

### Exercise 10.7

Rewrite the following sentences by converting the descriptions into compound adjectives ending in *-ing* or *-ed*.

- 1. The battery dies quickly.                      It is a ----- battery.
- 2. Their friendship lasted a long time.        It was a ----- friendship.

- |                                   |                        |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3. She writes with her left hand. | She is a ----- writer. |
| 4. She looks beautiful.           | She is a ----- woman.  |
| 5. They work very hard.           | They are ----- people. |

## 10.3 Verb compounds

A verb compound is a structure that is made up of two free morphemes or lexical substructures. The compound structure is used to present a new idea. The left-hand substructure, which is the modifier (M), can belong to any word class. The right-hand substructure, which is the head (H), is a verb. The resulting structure is a verb compound, describing a class of non-stable, temporal event. The term **event** refers to something that happens at a given place and time together with the circumstances in which it takes place. The event schema for a verb compound, which comprises a set of instances, is [-+V], with the slot being filled by items of different word classes. The items represent aspects that are part of the meaning of a verb, whose use depends on the way the speaker describes an event and opts for the item to modify the verb. The aspects which modify a verb disclose precise details of the schema. They include purpose, causation, comparison, make, location and feature.

Prototypically, a verb compound consists of two substructures, the first of which is a noun. Depending on the nature of the combining substructures, the verb compounds express such relationships as:

- (a) 'M performs H'. This sense of purpose arises when the modifier is a noun representing an instrument and the head is a transitive verb representing the action, thus expressing an instrument-action relationship. For example, *to spoon-feed* a baby is to feed a baby with a spoon. Additional examples include *bottle-feed*, *breastfeed*, *hand-weave*, *head-shake*, *tape-record*, *vacuum-clean*, and so on.
- (b) 'M undergoes H'. This sense of causation emerges when the modifier is a noun symbolizing a receiver and the head is a transitive verb symbolizing action, thus expressing a receiver-action relationship. For example, *to manhunt* is to search for a person, especially a criminal. Additional examples include *baby-sit*, *book review*, *brainwash*, *haircut*, *head-hunt*, *housekeep*, and so on.
- (c) 'M triggers H'. This sense of causation surfaces when the modifier is a noun naming the agent and the head is a transitive verb naming the action, thus expressing an agent-action relationship. For example, *to force-feed people* is to force someone to swallow food against his or her will. Additional examples include *blow-dry*, *browbeat*, *court-martial*, *frog-march*, *spin-dry*, and so on.

## Exercise 10.8

Below are some verb compounds. Explain what the significance of the head used in each one is.

1. hand-weave = -----
2. stage-manage = -----
3. frog-march = -----
4. spin-dry = -----
5. head-hunt = -----

- (d) 'M is the manner H is done'. This sense of comparison appears when the modifier is a noun indicating the manner and the head is an intransitive verb indicating the action, thus expressing a manner-action relationship. For example, *to goose-step* is to march with the legs lifted high and straight. Additional examples include *double-park*, *hitch-hike*, *mass-produce*, *play-act*, *touch-type*, *wolf-whistle*, and so on.
- (e) 'H is made of M'. This sense of make occurs when the modifier is a noun denoting the material and the head is a verb (transitive or intransitive) denoting the action, thus expressing a material-action relationship. The formations refer to tools or devices. For example, *to sandbag* is to use bags full of sand as a defence against flooding, explosions, and so on. Additional examples include *bar-code*, *machine-gun*, *rubber-stamp*, *sandpaper*, *snowball*, *stonewall*, and so on.
- (f) 'M is the place for H'. This sense of location follows when the modifier is a noun referring to the place and the head is a verb (transitive or intransitive) referring to the action, thus expressing a place-action relationship. For example, *to lip-read* is to understand what someone is saying by watching the movements of their mouth. Additional examples include *back-comb*, *field-test*, *ice-skate*, *sight-read*, *toilet-train*, *water-ski*, and so on.

## Exercise 10.9

Write the verb compound which fits the definition cited in each of the following list.

1. To produce a lot of goods using machines in a factory. -----
2. To travel by getting free rides in someone else's vehicle. -----
3. To read and perform music at sight without preparation. -----
4. To type using all fingers and without looking at the keys. -----
5. To block or hinder someone or something by delaying. -----

Peripherally, a verb compound consists of two substructures, the modifier is either a verb or an adjective and the head is a verb. Depending on the

nature of the combining substructures, the compound expresses the following semantic relationships:

- (a) 'M and H happen simultaneously'. This sense proceeds when both the modifier and the head are verbs (transitive or intransitive) and denote action, thus expressing an action-action relationship. For example, *to sleepwalk* is to walk in one's sleep. Additional examples include *chain-smoke*, *crash-land*, *cross-check*, *cross-examine*, *drink-drive*, *kick-start*, *shrink-wrap*, *stir-fry*, and so on.
- (b) 'M is the feature and H the action'. This sense happens when the modifier is an adjective suggesting the feature and the head is a verb suggesting the action, thus expressing a feature-action relationship. For example, *to dry-clean* is to clean clothes with a chemical solvent rather than water. Additional examples include *blacklist*, *highlight*, *deep-freeze*, *deep-fry*, *fast-track*, *fine-tune*, *soft-land*, *white-wash*, and so on.

Exercise 10.10

Write sentences using the following verb compounds to demonstrate their meanings.

- 1. crash-land -----
- 2. deep-fry -----
- 3. kick-start -----
- 4. fast-track -----
- 5. fine-tune -----

Summary

In this chapter, I probed the role of the category theory in the semantic description of compounds. A **category** is a network of senses structured in terms of prototype and periphery. The **prototype** of a compound class is usually the most frequent sense and the first sense which is learnt in acquiring a language. The **periphery** of a compound class comprises its other senses which are linked to the prototype via semantic extensions. The various senses of a compound class acquire a small number of minimally-distinct definitions. It is only through use in context that compounds acquire particular meanings. One can specify the respects in which the senses are distinguishable by appealing to certain semantic principles. Over time, a compound may acquire a number of distinct meanings and, as a result, a complex lexical entry. The morphological form of a compound is motivated by its semantic organization, thus form and meaning are inseparable. In each formation, the modifier provides a certain



piece of semantic information. On the basis of these definitions, it becomes feasible to group converging compounds in domains. This task is discussed in the upcoming chapter.

In Table 10.1, the different categories in which compounds in English appear are summarized.

Table 10.1 Categories of compounds

Compounds					
Noun compounds		Adjective compounds		Verb compounds	
Prototype	Periphery	Prototype	Periphery	Prototype	Periphery
H is part of M	H does the action of M	H is the colour of M	M is a shade of H	M performs H	M and H happen simultaneously
M is part of H	H has the property of M	M is the goal for H	M is the quality and H is the possessor	M undergoes H	M is the feature and H the action
H is made of M				M triggers H	
H is used for M		H is the feature of M		M is the manner H is done	
M is used for H		M is the cause for H		H is made of M	
H holds M		M is the field for H		M is the place for H	
H is positioned in M		M is the place for H			
M is positioned in H		M is the measure of H			
H is the time for M		M is without H			
M is the time for H		M is the thing and H its action			
M is the field with which H is concerned		M is the thing to which H is disposed			
H has the feature of M		M is the destination towards which H moves			
H causes M		M is the thing and H is the type			
M causes H					
M is a measure of H					

# Compound Domains

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Chapter 11 investigates the semantic roles of English compounds when they form lexical groups. Stemming from the cognitive assumption that linguistic items can best be understood against the background of particular bodies of knowledge known as domains, it is argued that compounds form different domains. To understand the meaning of any compound, it is necessary to understand the properties of the domain in which it occurs as well as the properties of the other participating members. The intention of the chapter is to reveal the precise meanings of the compounds by relating them to the specific facets which they occupy within the domains. The chapter includes two sections. Section 11.1 investigates inter-word-class domains: purpose, make, location, causation and comparison. Section 11.2 explores intra-word-class domains: motion, affliction, dispossession, disposition, resemblance, gender and agenthood. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I illustrate the essence of the domain and draw its multi-faceted structure. Second, I identify the particular facet which a given compound activates. Third, I provide examples to demonstrate the distinctive behaviour of each compound.

## 11.1 Inter-word-class domains

Relative to their definitional analyses, compounds form various domains in view of which their meanings can be described. Inter-word-class domains involve rivalry or competition between compounds belonging to different word classes. A **domain** is a context of background knowledge with regard to which the specific meanings of the compounds are identified. Within the domains, the compounds occupy different facets, and so take their shares in highlighting the domains. A **facet** is an element in a domain which expresses a particular concept. Although the compounds represent the same domain, they are distinctive in use. In each compound, the speaker construes the scene differently, and so uses it discriminately. Each compound has a different use, which is the result of the way the speaker describes the scene. In each compound, it is the head which evokes the specific facet, and consequently represents the shift in meaning. The following introduces the domains which the compounds evoke.

### 11.1.1 Purpose

The domain of **purpose** is a knowledge area which refers to the goal for which something is done or for which something exists. The attainment of a purpose incorporates three facets. The first facet is the tool used to attain the purpose. Morphologically, this is represented by the use of N+N compounds. As evidence, such compounds take adjectives of age such as *old*, colour such as *pink*, or size such as *large*. The second facet is the property of the tool used in attaining the purpose. Morphologically, this is represented by the use of N+Adj compounds. As evidence, such compounds take adverbs of intensification such as *very*, or adverbs of comparison such as *more*. The third facet is the way the purpose is attained. Morphologically, this is represented by the use of N+V compounds. As evidence, such compounds take adverbs of manner such as *often* or the continuous marker *-ing*.

To substantiate the argument, we need to consider some examples of compound words.

- (1) a. bath towel, kitchen chair, gas-mask
- b. cost-effective, fortune-hungry, profit-thirsty
- c. tape-record, breastfeed, hand-weave

The compounds cited in (1) are formed by combining two free morphemes. In (1a), *bath-towel* consists of a nominal modifier and a nominal head. In (1b), *cost-effective* consists of a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. In (1c), *tape-record* consists of a nominal modifier and a verbal head. The compounds focus on different facets of **purpose**. In (1a), the noun compounds focus on the tool or instrument in achieving the purpose. For example, *a bath-towel* means ‘a towel used for drying the body after having a bath or shower’. In (1b), the adjective compounds focus on the feature of the instrument in realizing the purpose. For example, *a cost-effective approach* means ‘an approach that is economically worthwhile in relation to its cost’. In (1c), the verb compounds focus on the way the action is performed by the instrument. For example, *to tape-record* means ‘to record something on tape’.

#### Exercise 11.1

The compounds below evoke the domain of purpose. Show how each compound represents a different facet.

- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. breastfeed     | ----- |
| 2. kitchen chair  | ----- |
| 3. fortune-hungry | ----- |

### 11.1.2 Make

The domain of **make** is a knowledge sphere which captures the production of something by using a particular material. The production process contains three facets. The first facet is the material used in manufacturing the product. Morphologically, this is symbolized by the use of N+N compounds. Evidence in support of such compounds comes from the use of articles such as *a*, ordinal numerals such as *first*, or cardinal numbers such as *two* before them. The second facet is the property of the material used in the production. Morphologically, this is symbolized by the use of N+Adj compounds. Evidence in support of such compounds comes from the use of intensifiers such as *so*, or adjectives of shape such as *round* before them. The third facet is the way the product works. Morphologically, this is symbolized by the use of N+V compounds. Evidence in support of such compounds comes from the use of the infinitive *to*, or modals such as *will* before them.

To validate the claim, we need to examine some examples of compound words.

- (2) a. bronze medal, diamond ring, oak tree  
       b. paper-thin, crystal clear, feather-light  
       c. rubber-stamp, sandpaper, bar-code

The compounds cited in (2) are formed by combining two free morphemes. In (2a), *bronze medal* consists of a nominal modifier and a nominal head. In (2b), *paper-thin* consists of a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. In (2c), *rubber-stamp* consists of a nominal modifier and a verbal head. The compounds concentrate on different patterns of **make**. In (2a), the noun compounds concentrate on the material out of which the object is made. For example, *a bronze medal* means 'a medal that is made of bronze'. In (2b), the adjective compounds concentrate on the property of the object. For example, *a paper-thin box* means 'a box that is made extremely thin or delicate'. In (2c), the verb compounds concentrate on the way the object performs the action. For example, *to rubber-stamp* means 'to stamp a document to show that it has been officially approved'.

## Exercise 11.2

The compounds below exemplify different facets in the domain of **make**. Specify their meanings and give similar compounds by analogy.

1. sandpaper      -----  
-----
2. crystal clear      -----  
-----
3. diamond ring      -----  
-----

## 11.1.3 Location

The domain of **location** is background knowledge which names the site or position of something. The description of location subsumes three facets. The first facet is the thing which exists in the place. Morphologically, this is embodied by the use of N+N compounds. This is evidenced by the use of adjectives of material such as *tarmac* and quality such as *dull*, or points of the compass such as *west* and prepositions of location such as *along* before such compounds. The second facet is the property of the place. Morphologically, this is embodied by the use of N+Adj compounds. This is evidenced by the use of verbs *to be*, or linking verbs such as *become* before such compounds. The third facet is the activity occurring in the place. Morphologically, this is embodied by the use of N+V compounds. This is evidenced by the use of auxiliaries such as *is*, or modals such as *will* before such compounds.

To maintain the remark, we need to probe some examples of compound words.

- (3) a. coast road, country lane, space station  
b. brain-dead, heartfelt, seaborne  
c. field-test, sight-read, back-comb

The compounds cited in (3) are formed by combining two free morphemes. In (3a), *coast road* consists of a nominal modifier and a nominal head. In (3b), *brain-dead* consists of a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. In (3c), *field-test* consists of a nominal modifier and a verbal head. The compounds emphasize discrete aspects of **location**. In (3a), the noun compounds emphasize the place where the given object exists. For example, *a coast road* means 'a road that is on the coast'. In (3b), the adjective compounds emphasize the

property associated with the place. For example, a *brain-dead patient* means ‘a patient whose brain is dead’, that is, having suffered brain death. In (3c), the verb compounds emphasize the action that happens in the place. For example, *to field-test* means ‘to test in the field’, that is, to test something using the conditions that it is designed to operate under, especially in actual situations.

### Exercise 11.3

Which facet in the domain of location does the compound in each sentence evokes?

1. He pulled the car off the narrow country lane. -----
2. A highly skilled musician can sight-read music scores. -----
3. They hoped their heartfelt advice was of use to the man. -----

## 11.1.4 Causation

The domain of **causation** is a knowledge configuration which points to the reason why something happens. It is an action which causes something to exist. The description of causation consists of three components. The first component is the cause which brings about a result. Morphologically, this is manifested by the use of N+N compounds. This is shown by the use of articles such as *a*, or adjectives of quality such as *recent* before such compounds. The second component is the result which exists due to a cause. Morphologically, this is manifested by the use of N+Adj compounds. This is shown by the use of adverbs of degree such as *somewhat* before such compounds. The third component is the action affecting a receiver. Morphologically, this is manifested by the use of N+V compounds. This is shown by the use of *to*-infinitives or modals such as *would* before such compounds.

To verify the hypothesis, we need to investigate some examples of compound words.

- (4) a. gas blast, heat rash, cold sore
- b. camera-shy, girl-crazy, oil-rich
- c. head-hunt, baby-sit, housekeep

The compounds cited in (4) are formed by combining two free morphemes. In (4a), *gas blast* consists of a nominal modifier and a nominal head. In (4b),

*camera-shy* consists of a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. In (4c), *head-hunt* consists of a nominal modifier and a verbal head. The compounds highlight different dimensions of **causation**. In (4a), the noun compounds highlight the cause. For example, *a gas blast* means ‘a blast that is caused by gas’. In (4b), the adjective compounds highlight the result. For example, *a camera-shy girl* means ‘a girl who is shy of posing for a camera’, that is, unwilling to be photographed. In (4c), the verb compounds highlight the action. For example, *to head-hunt* means ‘to recruit skilled personnel’, that is, to persuade someone to leave their job by offering them another job with more pay and a higher position.

Exercise 11.4

The compounds listed below stand for the domain of causation. Assign each one to the appropriate facet provided.

girl-crazy, heat rash, baby-sit, cold sore, housekeep, oil-rich

1. Result
2. Cause
3. Action
- 
- 
- 

11.1.5 Comparison

The domain of **comparison** is a knowledge space which alludes to the way in which two things are examined in order to discover similarities or differences between them. The first facet is the object which is used as a basis for comparison. Morphologically, this is exemplified by the use of N+N compounds. This is borne out by the use of adjectives of shape such as *round* before such compounds. The second facet is the feature which is singled out for comparison. Morphologically, this is exemplified by the use of N+Adj compounds. This is borne out by the use of adverbs of degree such as *rather* before such compounds. The third facet is the way in which the comparison is carried out. Morphologically, this is exemplified by the use of N+V compounds. This is borne out by the use of frequency adverbs such as *always*, or *to*-infinitives before such compounds.

To assess the observation, we need to scrutinize some examples of compound words.

- (5) a. bullet head, bell-jar, pot belly  
 b. sky-blue, ash-grey, brick-red  
 c. wolf-whistle, mass-produce, touch-type

The compounds cited in (5) are formed by combining two free morphemes. In (5a), *bullet head* consists of a nominal modifier and a nominal head. In (5b), *sky-blue* consists of a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. In (5c), *wolf-whistle* consists of a nominal modifier and a verbal head. The compounds pinpoint different instances of **comparison**. In (5a), the noun compounds pinpoint the object as a basis for the comparison. For example, *a bullet head* means ‘a head that is like a bullet’, that is, having a small round head. In (5b), the adjective compounds pinpoint the feature as a basis for the comparison. For example, *a sky-blue blouse* means ‘a blouse that is as blue as the sky’, that is, having the blue colour of the sky. In (5c), the verb compounds pinpoint the way the comparison is performed. For example, *wolf-whistle* means ‘to whistle approvingly at a female’.

### Exercise 11.5

The compound words below activate the domain of comparison. Point out the differences between them in terms of facet and meaning.

- |                 |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| 1. bell-jar     | ----- | ----- |
| 2. ash-grey     | ----- | ----- |
| 3. mass-produce | ----- | ----- |

## 11.2 Intra-word-class domains

Relative to their definitional analyses, compounds form various domains on the basis of which their meanings can be characterized. Intra-word-class domains involve rivalry between compounds belonging to the same word class. A **domain** is a configuration in which different types of relationships hold between its members, which are defined in terms of their minimally-divergent semantic roles. Within the domains, the compounds compete to represent different facets, and so take their shares in highlighting the domain. A **facet** is an aspect in a domain which expresses a particular concept. Although the compounds relate to the same domain, their meanings are quite different. Each compound occupies a certain facet, which provides a solution to its



interpretation. Each compound has its own sense, which is sparked by the way the speaker describes the scene. The specific facet which the compound represents is encoded by the head, which consequently determines its meaning. The following presents the domains which the compounds evoke.

### 11.2.1 Motion

The domain of **motion** is a cognitive frame which involves the process of moving an entity from one place to another, or the way an entity changes position or direction. It has four facets. The first facet is direction, referring to the position towards which someone or something moves or faces. Morphologically, this is illustrated by the use of N-ward compounds. *Ward* implies facing the region designated by the combining noun. The second facet is destination, referring to the place to which a person is going or to which a thing is being taken. Morphologically, this is illustrated by the use of N-bound compounds. *Bound* implies travelling towards the place designated by the combining noun. The third facet is mobility, referring to the quality of being mobile. Morphologically, this is illustrated by the use of N-based compounds. *Based* implies moving around. The fourth facet is restriction, the condition of being restricted. Morphologically, this is illustrated by the use of N-bound compounds. *Bound* implies being stuck in a particular place.

To vindicate the assumption, we need to delve into some examples of compound words.

- (6) a. homeward, seaward, southward
- b. eastbound, northbound, Leeds-bound,
- c. ground-based, campus-based, farm-based
- d. chair-bound, house-bound, studio-bound

The compounds cited in (6) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. They denote different facets within **motion**. In (6a), the head *ward* denotes moving in a particular direction or towards a particular place. For example, *a homeward journey* is a journey that is on the way towards home. In (6b), the head *bound* denotes going towards a particular destination. For example, *an eastbound train* is a train whose destination is the east. In (6c), the head *based* denotes moving around a particular place. For example, *a ground-based telescope* is a telescope that is installed on the ground but its range of activity extends beyond it. In (6d),

the head *bound* denotes being confined to a particular place. For example, a *chair-bound patient* is a patient unable to walk, whose movement is confined to a wheel chair.

### Exercise 11.6

The domain of motion is evoked by the compounds below. Show which semantic principle differentiates one from another?

- |                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| 1. seaward      | ----- |
| 2. northbound   | ----- |
| 3. campus-based | ----- |
| 4. desk-bound   | ----- |

## 11.2.2 Affliction

The domain of **affliction** is a cognitive base which describes the state in which an entity suffers pains or experiences problems. Affliction has two facets: sudden or chronic. A sudden affliction is one that happens unexpectedly or suddenly without warning. Morphologically, this is materialized by the use of N-stricken compounds. *Stricken* emphasizes an element of suddenness or surprise. It describes something as being hit by the affliction imparted by the modifier. As evidence, such compounds accept expressions like *suddenly*. A chronic affliction, by contrast, is one that is marked by long duration or frequent recurrence. Morphologically, this is materialized by the use of N-ridden compounds. *Ridden* emphasizes an element of entrenchment. It describes something as being plagued by the affliction imparted by the modifier. As evidence, such compounds accept expressions like *consistently*.

To certify the foregoing point, we need to examine some examples of compound words.

- (7) a. hurricane-stricken, poverty-stricken, famine-stricken  
 b. drought-ridden, mosquito-ridden, flood-ridden

The compounds cited in (7) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. They shed light on different elements of **affliction**. In (7a), the head *stricken* sheds light on something as happening suddenly. For example, a *hurricane-stricken coast* is a coast that is suddenly hit by a violent wind. In (7b), the head *ridden* sheds light on

something as being entrenched. For example, a *drought-ridden area* is an area that is consistently plagued by drought.

### Exercise 11.7

The following compounds are examples of the domain of affliction. Yet, each represents a different facet. Explain.

1. poverty-stricken district      -----
2. mosquito-ridden hostel        -----

### 11.2.3 Dispossession

The domain of **dispossession** is a cognitive scenario which marks the state in which an entity lacks something that is good to own or something that is better to disown. Dispossession has two facets: permanent or temporary. A permanent dispossession is one that lasts for a long time or forever. Morphologically, this is substantiated by the use of N-less compounds. *Less* indicates that the absence of the thing is of permanent nature. It describes something as being devoid of the thing imparted by the modifier. As evidence, such compounds accept adverbs indicating high frequency such as *always*. A temporary dispossession is one that lasts for a short time. Morphologically, this is substantiated by the use of N-free compounds. *Free* indicates that the absence of the thing is of temporary nature. It describes something as lacking the thing imparted by the modifier. As evidence, such compounds accept adverbs indicating low frequency such as *occasionally*.

To support the issue, we need to analyse some examples of compound words.

- (8) a. spotless, flawless, boneless  
       b. queue-free, cloud-free, weed-free

The compounds cited in (8) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and an adjectival nominal head. They explicate different meanings of **dispossession**. In (8a), the head *less* explicates a perpetual lack of something. For example, a *spotless house* is a house that is devoid of dirt. In (8b), the head *free* explicates a temporary lack of something. For example, *queue-free check-in* is check-in that has no queue at present.

**Exercise 11.8**

The compounds below are representatives of the domain of dispossession. Yet, each specifies a different facet. Explain.

1. hassle-free journey      -----
2. flawless performance      -----

**11.2.4 Disposition**

The domain of **disposition** is a cognitive account which alludes to the tendency of an entity to act or react in certain situations in characteristic ways. It has two facets. The first facet is awareness, the ability to notice things or realize their existence using one's senses. Morphologically, this is realized by the use of N-conscious compounds. *Conscious* implies focusing one's attention on something or being preoccupied by it. It describes someone as being aware of the thing conveyed by the modifier. The second facet is inclination, the tendency to act in a certain way under certain circumstances. Inclination can be either desirable or undesirable. Morphologically, these are realized by the use of N-minded and N-prone compounds. *Minded* implies regarding something with attention, considering it important and having it in mind as a purpose or goal. It describes someone as being inclined towards the thing conveyed by the modifier. *Prone* implies either being easily influenced by something undesirable or having a fancy for it. It describes someone as being susceptible to the thing conveyed by the modifier.

To attest to the preceding idea, we need to explore some examples of compound words.

- (9) a. garden-conscious, dress-conscious, weight-conscious
- b. peace-minded, business-minded, environment-minded
- c. gaffe-prone, injury-prone, mischief-prone

The compounds cited in (9) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and an adjectival head. They portray different components of **disposition**. In (9a), the head *conscious* portrays someone as being aware of or preoccupied with something. For example, a *garden-conscious housewife* is a housewife who shows particular interest in her garden. In (9b), the head *minded* portrays someone as being inclined towards something desirable.

For example, a *peace-minded proponent* is a proponent who is inclined towards peace. In (9c), the head *prone* portrays someone as being inclined towards something undesirable. For example, a *gaffe-prone person* is a person who is disposed towards gaffes, tactless remarks.

### Exercise 11.9

Replace the italicized words in the sentences below by a compound representing the appropriate facet in the domain of disposition.

1. Most people are *interested* in their dress.      They are-----.
2. Most investors *look for* profits in business.      They are-----.
3. Children often *get* injuries in playgrounds.      They are -----.

## 11.2.5 Resemblance

The domain of **resemblance** is a cognitive space which incorporates similarity between one thing and another with the aim of making it easier to understand or enhance its value. It involves similarity in either appearance or essence. For the latter, see Chapter 8. **Appearance** involves two facets: category or pattern. Category is the class or division within a system of classification. Morphologically, this is actualized by the use of N-type compounds. *Type* signals the category, genre, model or form of something which makes it a typical example of a class. It describes something as resembling the thing expressed by the modifier in specimen. Pattern, by contrast, is the manner in which an entity is done or organized. Morphologically, this is actualized by the use of N-style compounds. *Style* signals the pattern, mechanism or manner of carrying out something. It describes something as resembling the thing expressed by the modifier in mode.

To confirm the premise, we need to look into some examples of compound words.

- (10) a. French-type, Rome-type, California-type  
b. German-style, British-style, French-style

The compounds cited in (10) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and a nominal head. They identify different sides of **resemblance**. In (10a), the head *type* identifies the category of an entity. For

example, *French-type bread* is bread that resembles bread made in France in form. In (10b), the head *style* identifies the manner in which an entity is done. For example, *a German-style car* is a car that resembles cars made in Germany in mechanism.

### Exercise 11.10

The compounds below signal resemblance in appearance. Comment on the differences in meaning between them.

1. Rome-type -----  
-----
2. British-style -----  
-----

## 11.2.6 Gender

The domain of **gender** is a cognitive configuration which names the sex of an animate entity. It refers to the physical and/or social condition of being male or female. It has three facets. The first facet is restricted to males. Morphologically, this is spelled out by the use of N-man compounds. Man refers to an adult human male. The second facet is restricted to females. Morphologically, this is spelled out by the use of N-woman compounds. Woman refers to an adult human female. The third facet is neutral, covering a man, woman or child. Morphologically, this is spelled out by the use of N-person compounds. Person refers to a human being. This type of compound has found widespread use in recent years as a gender-neutral alternative to *-man* or *-woman*. This is the result of the equal opportunity policy being employed in all walks of life, especially in occupational and social roles.

To uphold the comment, we need to explain some examples of compound words.

- (11) a. chairman, salesman, spokesman  
b. chairwoman, saleswoman, spokeswoman  
c. chairperson, salesperson, spokesperson

The compounds cited in (11) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and a nominal head. They depict different types of

**gender.** In (11a), the head *man* depicts someone as being male. For example, *a chairman* is ‘a man who presides at the meetings of an organisation’. In (11b), the head *woman* depicts someone as being female. For example, *a chairwoman* is ‘a woman who presides at the meetings of an organisation’. In (11c), the head *person* depicts someone as being either male or female. For example, *a chairperson* is ‘a person, man or woman, who presides at the meetings of an organisation’.

Exercise 11.11

The following are gender-biased words denoting occupations. Coin words that are neutral in denotation.

1. anchorman	anchorwoman	-----
2. businessman	businesswoman	-----
3. counterman	counterwoman	-----
4. ombudsman	ombudswoman	-----
5. serviceman	servicewoman	-----

11.2.7 Agenthood

The domain of **agenthood** is a cognitive field which identifies performers who provide particular services. It refers to a person or thing that takes an active role in producing a specified effect. Agenthood in compounds has four facets, each of which is represented by a particular compound. The first facet describes a performer skilled in the manufacture of concrete or physical objects, especially made of wood. Morphologically, this is demonstrated by the use of N-wright compounds. Wright means a builder or creator of something. The second facet describes a performer who attempts to stir up or spread something abstract or verbal, usually petty or discreditable. Morphologically, this is demonstrated by the use of N-monger compounds. Monger means someone who sells goods from place to place. The third facet describes a performer who tends, sells or delivers concrete or physical objects. Morphologically, this is demonstrated by the use of N-man compounds. Man means an adult human male. The fourth facet describes a performer who shares a space or is involved in the same activity with another. Morphologically, this is demonstrated by the use of N-mate compounds. Mate means a friend or helper.

To defend the statement, we need to explicate some instances of compound words.

- (12) a. shipwright, millwright, wheelwright  
 b. warmonger, scandalmonger, rumourmonger  
 c. postman, gasman, milkman  
 d. workmate, roommate, flatmate

The compounds cited in (12) are formed by combining two free morphemes: a nominal modifier and a nominal head. They describe different facets of **agenthood**. In (12a), the head *wright* describes someone as exerting physical efforts to build an object. For example, *a shipwright* is ‘someone who builds or repairs ships’. In (12b), the head *monger* describes someone as exerting verbal efforts to promote something negative. For example, *a warmonger* is ‘someone who seeks to promote or bring about war’. In (12c), the head *man* describes someone as exerting physical efforts to perform certain roles or jobs. For example, *a postman* is ‘someone who delivers letters and parcels’. In (12d), the head *mate* describes someone as sharing a place with someone else or helping others with a particular activity. For example, *a workmate* is ‘a person with whom one works’, a fellow worker.

### Exercise 11.12

Form compounds denoting agenthood by matching the modifiers with the heads given in the following list.

- |            |        |       |
|------------|--------|-------|
| 1. wheel   | man    | ----- |
| 2. team    | monger | ----- |
| 3. fashion | wright | ----- |
| 4. milk    | monger | ----- |
| 5. rumour  | mate   | ----- |

## Summary

In this chapter, I evaluated the importance of the domain theory to the semantic description of compounds. A **domain** is a conceptual area relative to which the meanings of compounds are characterized. Each domain has its own internal structure. It involves arguments and is based on experiences. It comprises particular facets. A **facet** is a portion of a domain which deals with a certain feature of an experience, and so has discernible characteristics. Each facet is an area of activity within which humans are engaged. The precise meaning of a compound results from identifying the domain in which it is



embedded, and from contrasting it with competing counterparts. Compounds keep company by representing the nuclear meaning of a domain, but part company by representing its different facets. The differences in their representational roles are conducive to differences in meaning. Compounds should not be treated in isolation. For their precise description and specific roles in language, they should be grouped together and placed in appropriate cognitive domains. The speaker’s choice of a compound depends on conceptualizing a situation. This task is taken up in the upcoming chapter.

The (sub)domains which compounds in English evoke are summarized in the tables below. In Table 11.1 the (sub)domains evoked by inter-word-class compounds are summarized, whereas in Table 11.2 the (sub)domains evoked by intra-word-class compounds are summarized.

**Table 11.1** The (sub)domains evoked by inter-word-class compounds

Domains	Facets	Exponents	Meaning differences
purpose	tool	N-N	denotes the tool used to attain the purpose
	property	N-Adj	denotes the property of the tool used in attaining the purpose
	manner	N-V	denotes the way the purpose is attained
make	material	N-N	denotes the material used in manufacturing the product
	property	N-Adj	denotes the property of the material used in the production
	manner	N-V	denotes the way the product works
location	thing	N-N	the thing existing in the place
	property	N-Adj	the property of the place
	activity	N-V	the activity occurring in the place
causation	cause	N-N	denotes the cause which brings about a result
	result	N-Adj	denotes the result which exists due to a cause
	action	N-V	denotes the action affecting a receiver
comparison	object	N-N	the object which is used as a basis for comparison
	feature	N-Adj	the feature which is singled out for comparison
	manner	N-V	the way in which the comparison is carried out

**Table 11.2** The (sub)domains evoked by intra-word-class compounds

Domains	Facets	Exponents	Meaning differences
motion	direction	N-ward	refers to the position towards which someone or something moves or faces
	destination	N-bound	refers to the place to which a person is going or to which a thing is being taken
	mobility	N-based	refers to the quality of being mobile
	restriction	N-bound	refers to the condition of being restricted
affliction	sudden	N-stricken	refers to an event that happens unexpectedly or suddenly without warning
	chronic	N-ridden	refers to an event that is marked by long duration or frequent recurrence
dispossession	permanent	N-less	denotes something that lasts for a long time or forever
	temporary	N-free	denotes something that lasts for a short time
disposition	awareness	N+conscious	the ability to notice things or realize their existence using one's senses
	inclination		
	desirable	N-minded	regarding something with attention, and having it in mind as a goal
	undesirable	N-prone	either being easily influenced by something undesirable or having a fancy for it
resemblance	category	N-type	signals the genre, model or form of something
	pattern	N-style	signals the mechanism or manner of carrying out something
gender	male	N-man	refers to an adult human male
	female	N-woman	refers to an adult human female
	neutral	N-person	refers to a human being
agenthood	performer	N-wright	describes one who is skilled in making concrete or physical objects, especially of wood
	performer	N-monger	describes one who attempts to stir up or spread something abstract or verbal, usually petty or discreditable
	performer	N-man	describes one who tends, sells or delivers concrete or physical objects
	performer	N-mate	describes one who shares a space or is involved in the same activity with another

# Compound Construals

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Chapter 12 probes the influence of construal on the interpretation of compound pairs when they act as rivals. Taking the cue from the cognitive assumption that no two expressions are alike in language, it is argued that compound pairs represent different conceptualizations even when they look similar. The intention of the chapter is to indicate the speaker's ability to conceptualize a situation in different ways and choose the appropriate linguistic structures to represent it in discourse. The chapter includes two sections. Section 12.1 covers properties of compounds, in which construal offers clarifications for intricacies of compounds. Section 12.2 treats distinctions in compounds, in which construal provides explanations for rivalries in compounds. In both sections, I pursue three steps. First, I explore the nuances of language. Second, I identify the compounds signalling them. Third, I provide examples to demonstrate the distinctive uses of the compound pairs.

## 12.1 Properties

Compounds demonstrate a number of properties like inseparability, reversibility, analogy, accommodation and ambiguity. These properties are accounted for by construal. **Construal** is the way in which speakers perceive the world and express it in language. One dimension of construal is **perspective**, the way of regarding a situation which changes relative to the requirement of the discourse. Each compound is a vehicle of a certain meaning, whose identity is governed by the head. Alternative compounds available to the speaker are, therefore, not treated on an equal footing. They are not synonymous even if they share, more or less, the same source. The properties are important for a better understanding of compounds in two ways. First, they reveal the identity of compounds, and so help us to learn more about their behaviour. Second, they explain the conditions under which compounds are used, and so help us to avoid misusing them in communication. Below is a description of each property.

### 12.1.1 Inseparability

Inseparability describes two things as being so closely connected that they cannot be considered separately. In word formation, compounds are inseparable. Morphologically, a compound is a combination of two free morphemes, be they nouns, adjectives or verbs. Phonologically, the stress is on the first component. Semantically, its meaning does not only reside in the meanings of the components, but also in the clues provided by the context in which it is used. The components are analysable, but the link between them is, in some cases, insufficient to reveal what is meant. As such, compounds oppose syntactic phrases. Morphologically, a syntactic phrase is a noun phrase consisting of a determiner, an adjective and a noun. Phonologically, the stress is on the second element. Semantically, its meaning is a combination of the meanings of the elements. The elements are analysable and the link between them is transparent. A search through their occurrences validates this property. Each construction serves a different function. Compounds do not accept the insertion of a word between their substructures, whereas syntactic phrases do. By way of illustration, consider the examples below:

- (1) green house vs. greenhouse
  - a. She stopped and pointed dramatically at a dark *green house*.
  - b. A *greenhouse* packed with pretty plants is a cheering sight.

The examples in (1) contain the same wording. The modifier is an adjective and the head a noun. Still, each represents a particular construal which the speaker imposes on the scene, and so has a different use in the language. In (1a), *green house* is a syntactic phrase. It means ‘a house that is painted green’. In the phrase, both elements are accented, but the second is accented more heavily. *Green house* collocates with such phrases as *considered a historical treasure, constructed in the 1920s, designed by architect . . . , located in . . . street, restored to its original charm*, and so on. In (1b), *greenhouse* is a compound. It means ‘a glass house for the cultivation and exhibition of plants’. In the compound, the first substructure is clearly accented. The compound has mostly a falling intonation. *Greenhouse* collocates with such words as *crops, effects, emissions, gases, plants*, and so on. Of the two examples, only the syntactic phrase in (1a) allows the insertion of a lexical item as in *a green dark house*.

**Exercise 12.1**

The expressions in (a) are syntactic phrases, whereas those in (b) are compounds. For each one, indicate what the interpretation is.

- |                       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| 1. a. a paper 'basket | ----- |
| b. a 'paper basket    | ----- |
| 2. a. a key 'position | ----- |
| b. a 'key position    | ----- |
| 3. a. a black 'board  | ----- |
| b. a 'blackboard      | ----- |
| 4. a. a brown 'stone  | ----- |
| b. a 'brownstone      | ----- |
| 5. a. a wet 'suit     | ----- |
| b. a 'wet suit        | ----- |

**12.1.2 Reversibility**

Reversibility refers to an alteration of the normal order of things in either direction. In word formation, compounds display reversibility in that the positions of their substructures can be exchanged, which consequently entails a difference in reference. Conceptually, the speaker has the ability to construe a situation in different ways. Morphologically, the speaker has the ability to choose the right expression with the substructures being meaningfully arranged to stand for the situation being described. The difference in meaning is ascribed to which substructure functions as the head in the compound. This is in line with the prevalent premise that a difference in form always spells a difference in meaning. A trawl through the compound occurrences underscores this property. They highlight the fact that a variation in the morphological arrangement of the substructures of a compound causes a distinction in meaning or indicates a distinction in the discourse function. Consider, by way of illustration, the compound examples below:

- (2)   sugar cane vs. cane sugar
- a. She was fighting her way between pale yellow walls of *sugar cane*.
- b. She sweetened her tea with two spoonfuls of golden *cane sugar*.

The compounds in (2) are of the same wording. In both compounds, the modifier and the head are nouns. Yet, each receives a specific construal and so

has a separate function in the language. Each compound has a specific mission to carry out in the language. In (2a), *sugar cane* means 'a tall tropical plant with thick stems from which sugar is made'. *Sugar cane* collocates with such preceding phrases as *generated/prepared from, made/produced from, fields of, turned into, walls of*, and so on. In (2b), *cane sugar* means 'sugar obtained from the juice of sugar cane'. *Cane sugar* collocates with such words as *juice, processing, refining, syrup, sweetener*, and so on.

## Exercise 12.2

The following compounds differ in combinatorial arrangement and semantic value. Explain what each of them means.

- |                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. a. guest house   | ----- |
| b. house guest      | ----- |
| 2. a. wall paper    | ----- |
| b. paper wall       | ----- |
| 3. a. leather shoe  | ----- |
| b. shoe leather     | ----- |
| 4. a. flower garden | ----- |
| b. garden flower    | ----- |
| 5. a. houseboat     | ----- |
| b. boathouse        | ----- |

### 12.1.3 Analogy

Analogy is resemblance in some particulars between things which are otherwise unlike. In word formation, compounds can be composed by analogy, the process of creating new compounds on conventional expressions. Such expressions are referred to as **schemas**, general patterns on the bases of which new formations are coined. Analogy is an aspect of creativity, where speakers create new formations to serve different communicative intentions. This involves the process of comparing a new compound with an already established one that has similar features in order to explain it. One feature of analogy involves using certain core words in a number of compounds. The core words can be restricted to both modifier and head positions. A research into the compound occurrences confirms this property. The core words contribute the same meaning regardless of what they are paired with. Yet, the resulting formations have new semantic values and serve

new communicative purposes. The following series of compounds serve to illustrate this:

- (3) a. firewood
- b. firework
- c. fire station
- d. firestorm
- e. fire bomb

The compounds in (3a–e) contain a common first substructure. The modifier, *fire*, is the same whereas the head is different. In each case, the speaker conceptualizes the situation in a different way, and so uses a different compound to match up with the conceptualization. In (3a), *firewood* denotes purpose. It means ‘wood cut for burning’. In (3b), *firework* denotes content. It means ‘a small device which contains powder that burns or explodes to produce coloured lights and loud explosions, used especially at celebrations’. In (3c), *fire station* denotes location. It means ‘a building for a fire brigade or fire department and its equipment’. In (3d), *firestorm* denotes comparison. It means ‘a very large fire, usually started by bombs, that is kept burning by the high winds that it causes’. In (3e), *fire bomb* denotes causation. It means ‘a bomb that makes a fire start burning when it explodes’.

- f. campfire
- g. gunfire
- h. gas fire
- i. brush fire
- j. friendly fire

The compounds in (3f–j) contain a common second substructure. The modifier is different whereas the head, *fire*, is the same. In each case, the speaker construes the scene differently, and so uses a different compound to stand for the construal. In (3f), *campfire* denotes location. It means ‘a fire made outdoors by people who are camping’. In (3g), *gunfire* denotes activity. It means ‘the repeated firing of guns or the noise made by this’. In (3h), *gas fire* denotes causation. It means ‘a fire that is fuelled by gas’. In (3i), *brush fire* denotes action. It means ‘a relatively minor crisis taking place within an organization, department or between nations’. In (3j), *friendly fire* denotes feature. It means ‘shooting that accidentally kills people who are fighting on the same side’.

**Exercise 12.3**

The following compounds share the substructure *head*. Discuss how construal gives each compound a special semantic value.

- |                |       |               |       |
|----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 1. head office | ----- | 6. hothead    | ----- |
| 2. head count  | ----- | 7. pinhead    | ----- |
| 3. head ache   | ----- | 8. rail head  | ----- |
| 4. head boy    | ----- | 9. wellhead   | ----- |
| 5. head start  | ----- | 10. spearhead | ----- |

**12.1.4 Accommodation**

Accommodation is the ability of a thing to change slightly or adapt to changing circumstances so as to achieve a result. In word formation, compounds tend to accommodate in that one substructure adjusts its meaning to the meaning of the other so as to serve a different need in communication. In a compound, it is the head which adjusts its meaning when it is integrated with the modifier. Phrased differently, it is the head which adapts itself to the new environment signalled by the modifier. Accommodated compounds offer a flexible way of describing new experiences which speakers encounter in the world. A perusal of the compound occurrences establishes this property. Compounds formed by fitting the head to the modifier serve new functions and signify new ideas which are slightly different from those expressed by the compound substructures in isolation. This is elucidated by compound examples like the following:

- (4) a. storehouse  
 b. fashion house  
 c. coffee house  
 d. opera house  
 e. power house

The compounds in (4) contain the head substructure *house*, which in isolation means ‘a building for people to live in, usually for one family’. When the head substructure *house* is used in compounds, it accommodates its meaning to that of the modifier and acquires a new meaning. In (4a), *storehouse* refers to a building where things are stored. In (4b), *fashion house* refers to a company which produces new and expensive styles of clothes. In (4c), *coffee house* refers to a place serving coffee. In (4d), *opera house* refers to a theatre where



operas are performed. In (4e), *power house* refers to a station or plant that generates electricity.

Exercise 12.4

The following compounds contain the head *board*. Show how its meaning accommodates to that of the modifier in each of them.

- 1. diving board -----
- 2. ironing board -----
- 3. skirting board -----
- 4. drawing board -----
- 5. draining board -----

12.1.5 Ambiguity

Ambiguity is something which admits of interpretation in two or more ways, but seems to exclude one another in context. In word formation, compounds can be ambiguous in isolation. The ambiguity arises when a given compound is inherently obscure and has more than one reading. Although the wording of the compound is the same, each reading describes the situation differently. Such multiple readings are quite normal. Indeed, they are quite common given the fact that any situation can be interpreted in more than one way. This happens particularly when the compound is presented in isolation, and so it is impossible to determine which point of view the speaker has in mind when the compound is uttered. A review of the compound occurrences supports this property. They suggest a way to solve the ambiguity, which lies in either resorting to the specific contexts in which the compounds are used, or taking into account the special settings that are particular to their application area. The following compound exemplifies one such situation:

- (5) ballot box
  - a. They guided all the eligible voters to the *ballot boxes*.
  - b. They make their wishes known through the *ballot box*.

In (5), the compound *ballot box* has two readings. In the first reading in (5a), it refers to a box in which people put their ballot sheets after voting. *Ballot box* follows phrases denoting voting such as *deposit ballots in*, *drop voting slips into*, *place voting paper into*, *stuff the voting paper into*, *submit contest entries in*, and

precedes phrases denoting location such as *in a polling station*. In the second reading in (5b), it refers to the system of voting in an election. *Ballot box* follows phrases such as *express views through*, *make wishes known through*, *pass judgement by means of*, *power of people flows through*, *resolve difference through*, and so on.

### Exercise 12.5

The following compounds are ambiguous. For each one, show how construal accounts for its double interpretation.

- |                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| 1. notebook       | a. ----- |
|                   | b. ----- |
| 2. pacemaker      | a. ----- |
|                   | b. ----- |
| 3. French teacher | a. ----- |
|                   | b. ----- |
| 4. wallflower     | a. ----- |
|                   | b. ----- |
| 5. dumbshow       | a. ----- |
|                   | b. ----- |

## 12.2 Distinctions

Compounds demonstrate a number of distinctions, which are accounted for by construal. **Construal** is the way a situation is conceived and expressed in language. Two compounds may share the same content, but differ in terms of the construal imposed on that content. One dimension of construal is **perspective**, the viewpoint imposed by the speaker on a scene, on the basis of which the choice of a given compound is made. Each compound has its own character, which is determined by its head. The meaning of each compound has a slant of its own that fits a specific context. Alternative compounds are, therefore, not alike in value. They are not synonymous even if they share, more or less, the same source. The distinctions are important for a better grasp of compounds in two ways. First, they clarify the meanings of compounds, and so help us to fit them to the perspectives they embody. Second, they identify the environments in which compounds are permissible, and so help us to avoid interchanging them randomly. Below is a description of each distinction.

### 12.2.1 Category vs. pattern

Compound pairs which are representative of the domain of **resemblance** can be formed by sharing a modifier. In spite of this, each compound has a distinct definition. The distinction in their definition depends on the notions of category and pattern. Category is revealed by N-type compounds, referring to a class of things that are of the same type and share common features. It makes reference to the form, model or genre of something which makes it a typical example of a class. Pattern is revealed by N-style compounds, referring to the way in which something happens, develops or is done. It makes reference to the manner of behaving or the mechanisms of executing a thing. An examination of their collocations maintains the distinction. The point where the two compounds converge is when they describe concrete objects or places. The point where they diverge is when N-style is used to describe processes such as showing traits, designing buildings, producing objects or performing tasks. This distinction is best evidenced by a compound pair like:

- (6) family-type vs. family-style
- a. They were in a *family-type* hotel, with a fair proportion of guests.
  - b. In small firms, workers are expected to show *family-style* loyalty.

The adjectival compounds in (6) contain the modifier *family*. Despite sharing the same modifier, they are distinguishable in use. In (6a), the compound *family-type* means ‘resembling a family in specimen’. A *family-type hotel* has the size that is typical of a family. *Family-type* collocates with nouns referring to types of residence such as *guest house*, *home*, *hostel*, *hotel*, *pension*; their prevailing moods such as *ambience*, *atmosphere*, *aura*, *character*, *vibes*, and so on. In (6b), the compound *family-style* means ‘resembling a family in mode’. *Family-style loyalty* is a trait that is characteristic of family members. *Family-style* collocates with nouns referring to the act or manner of showing something such as *adherence*, *allegiance*, *dedication*, *devotion*, *loyalty*; relationships such as *affinity*, *bond*, *closeness*, *intimacy*, *rapport*, and so on.

### Exercise 12.6

The members of the following pairs of compounds describe the same situation, but they differ in meaning. For each one, show how construal captures the difference between them.

- |                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. a. aircraft-type  | ----- |
| b. aircraft-style    | ----- |
| 2. a. military-type  | ----- |
| b. military-style    | ----- |
| 3. a. village-type   | ----- |
| b. village-style     | ----- |
| 4. a. Hollywood-type | ----- |
| b. Hollywood-style   | ----- |

### 12.2.2 Direction vs. destination

Compound pairs which pertain to the domain of **motion** can be formed by sharing a modifier. Despite similarity in formation, each compound has its individual use. The distinction in their use is accounted for by the notions of direction and destination. Direction is demonstrated by N-ward compounds, referring to the position towards which someone or something moves, faces or is aimed. It describes an entity as looking towards the position expressed by the modifier. Destination is demonstrated by N-bound compounds, referring to the place to which someone is going or to which something is being sent. It describes an entity as leading towards the destination expressed by the modifier. A perusal of their collocations underlines the distinction. N-ward compounds co-occur with nouns implying movement, whereas their rival N-bound compounds co-occur with nouns denoting location. This distinction is clearly illustrated by a compound pair like:

- (7)   homeward vs. home-bound
- a. He covered the *homeward* journey at full pelt.
  - b. The *home-bound* train leaves at 22.00 hours.

The adjectival compounds in (7) contain the modifier *home*. Owing to the alternate ways of construing the situation, they take on different meanings in usage. In (7a), the compound *homeward* means 'looking towards home'. A *homeward journey* is a journey that faces or looks towards home. *Homeward* collocates with nouns meaning travel such as *cruise*, *flight*, *journey*, *trip*, *voyage*; movement such as *ride*, *run*, *rush*, *sail*, *walk*, and so on. In (7b), the compound *home-bound* means 'leading towards home'. A *home-bound train* is a train that leads towards home or whose destination is home. It means that *home* is the terminus or the final destination of the train. *Home-bound* collocates with nouns indicating location such as *highway*, *lane*, *path*, *platform*, *track*; vehicles such as *bus*, *car*, *plane*, *ship*, *train*, and so on.

### Exercise 12.7

The members of the following pairs of compounds construe the same scene differently. For each one, explain the meaning and construct a sentence as evidence.

1. a. northward \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. north-bound \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. a. seaward \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. sea-bound \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### 12.2.3 Mobility vs. restriction

Compound pairs which involve the domain of **motion** can be formed by sharing a modifier. Even though they share a common component, each compound takes on a particular meaning. The distinction in their meaning resides in the notions of mobility and restriction. Mobility is shown by N-based compounds, referring to the condition where the movements or actions of someone or something are not limited. It describes an entity as being positioned in but moving around the place expressed by the modifier. Restriction is shown by N-bound compounds, referring to the condition where the movements or actions of someone or something are limited. It describes an entity as being restricted or confined to the place expressed by the modifier. Precisely, it implies preventing one from leaving a place because of an unwanted condition. A study of their collocations confirms the distinction. N-based compounds tend to collocate with nouns referring to people. N-bound compounds tend to collocate with nouns referring to people. This distinction is strikingly exemplified by a compound pair like:

- (8) college-based vs. college-bound
- In 2005, she did a *college-based* course in Linguistics at Oxford.
  - The programme is for *college-bound* students who play baseball.

The adjectival compounds in (8) contain the modifier *college*. Because of the various ways of construing the situation, they are separate in usage. In (8a), the compound *college-based* means ‘positioned in but moving around a college’.

A *college-based course* is a course that is centred in a college but its scientific activities extend beyond it. *College-based* collocates with nouns referring to people; a plan of study such as *course, education, module, practice, study*, and so on. In (8b), the compound *college-bound* means ‘restricted or confined to a college’. A *college-bound student* is a student who is confined to a college where he studies, or his activities are restricted to the college. *College-bound* collocates with nouns referring to people and the services, training or tuition they receive.

### Exercise 12.8

Discuss the semantics of the following pairs of compounds, pointing out the dimensions of meaning which distinguish them.

- |                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. a. house-based    | ----- |
| b. house-bound       | ----- |
| 2. a. hospital-based | ----- |
| b. hospital-bound    | ----- |

## 12.2.4 Sudden vs. chronic

Compound pairs which are components of the domain of **affliction** can be formed by sharing a modifier. Although they have something in common, each compound plays a different role. The distinction in their role is explained by the notions of sudden and chronic. Sudden is asserted by N-stricken compounds, which mean happening, coming or done unexpectedly. Such compounds describe an entity as being struck by the problem imparted by the modifier. The problem mentioned is at its early stages or coming into existence. Chronic is asserted by N-ridden compounds, which mean continuing for a long time and cannot easily be solved. Such compounds describe an entity as being plagued by the problem imparted by the modifier. The problem mentioned is already in existence. A look at their collocations validates the distinction. N-stricken compounds prefer to collocate with nouns referring to people or their emotions. N-ridden compounds prefer to collocate with nouns referring to types of locations, people or their mental actions, or animals. This distinction is amply demonstrated by a compound pair like:

- (9)   grief-stricken vs. grief-ridden
- a. When her husband died, Mrs Williams was *grief-stricken*.
- b. Since the death of her husband, she has been *grief-ridden*.

The adjectival compounds in (9) contain the modifier *grief*. Although they share the same modifier, they are different in use. In (9a), the compound *grief-stricken* means ‘struck by grief’. A *grief-stricken woman* is a woman who is struck by and overcome with grief. Her husband’s death came as a great shock; it was so immediate or unexpected. *Grief-stricken* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *figure, husband, mistress, parent, wife*; emotions related to body parts such as *complexion, face, look, tone, voice*, and so on. In (9b), the compound *grief-ridden* means ‘plagued by grief’. A *grief-ridden woman* is a woman who is plagued, oppressed or obsessed by grief. She is unable to stop thinking about her husband, and so her sadness continues unabated, without weakening in strength or force. *Grief-ridden* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *father, mother, sufferer, survivor, widow*; resulting actions such as *default, failure, flop, loss, mistake*, and so on.

Exercise 12.9

Write compound pairs which illustrate the following semantic benchmarks, using the type of affliction provided.

- |                      |       |                    |       |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| 1. a. sudden guilt   | ----- | b. chronic guilt   | ----- |
| 2. a. sudden disease | ----- | b. chronic disease | ----- |
| 3. a. early drought  | ----- | b. rooted drought  | ----- |
| 4. a. early poverty  | ----- | b. rooted poverty  | ----- |

12.2.5 Permanent vs. temporary

Compound pairs which are segments of the domain of **dispossession** can be formed by sharing a modifier. Although they have something in common, each compound serves a distinct purpose. The distinction in their purpose is clarified by the notions of permanent and temporary. Permanent privation is represented by N-less compounds, describing something as continuing to exist for a long time. They mean devoid of the thing imparted by the modifier perpetually. Temporary privation is represented by N-free compounds, describing something as continuing for only a limited period of time. They mean lacking the thing imparted by the nominal root momentarily. A glance at their collocations substantiates the distinction. N-less compounds collocate with nouns referring to people, assignments, achievements or baked foods. N-free compounds collocate with nouns referring to people, activities, countries,

raw materials or events. This distinction is nicely reflected by a compound pair like:

- (10)   careless vs. carefree  
           a. He was charged with causing death by *careless* driving.  
           b. She went on a *carefree* excursion to the nearby island.

The adjectival compounds in (10) contain the modifier *care*. Although they have a common modifier, they differ in meaning. In (10a), the compound *careless* means 'devoid of care'. *Careless driving* refers to driving that is heedless, negligent and thoughtless. It means that the driver is habitually driving with insufficient attention. *Careless* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *camper, customer, driver, officer, singer*; their activities such as *camping, driving, singing, talking, wasting*, and so on. In (10b), the compound *care-free* means 'lacking care'. A *care-free excursion* is an excursion that is free of care in an admirable way. It means that the tourist is temporarily without care and enjoying the holiday. *Carefree* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *bachelor, couple, opponent, tourist, youth*; travel such as *cruise, excursion, journey, trip, voyage*; ways of living such as *attitude, life, nature, spirit, style*; time such as *days, hours, periods, spans, years*, and so on.

### Exercise 12.10

Make up compounds by adding *less* and *free* to the words between brackets so as to fit the construals expressed by the sentences.

1. a. He gives medical advice to ----- couples after marriage. (child)  
     b. Before giving birth, Beatrice took a final ----- holiday.
2. a. The sprinter showed no joy at his ----- victory in the race. (effort)  
     b. Johnson's swift rise to prominence appears to be -----.
3. a. The ----- hunter spent a week on his own in the bush. (fear)  
     b. In his annual speech, the activist called for a ----- world.
4. a. Chewing ----- gum stimulates the flow of saliva. (sugar)  
     b. To be healthy, it is important to have a ----- diet.

## 12.2.6 Awareness vs. desirable inclination

Compound pairs which are ingredients of the domain of **disposition** can be formed by sharing a modifier. Though related by formation, each compound



has a different context of use. The distinction in their use is spelled out by the notions of awareness and desirable inclination. Awareness is carried by N-conscious compounds, which mean knowing that something exists. They mean aware of the thing conveyed by the modifier. They imply vigilance in observation or alertness in drawing inferences from what one experiences. Desirable inclination is carried by N-minded compounds, which mean tending to do something good. They mean inclined towards the thing conveyed by the modifier. They imply having a particular purpose in mind and making every effort to realize it. An analysis of their collocations bears out the distinction. Nouns following N-conscious compounds refer to people who consider doing something, their frames of mind or business concerns. Nouns following N-minded compounds refer to people who like something and are willingly involved in it, or to their approaches. This distinction is vividly explained by a compound pair like:

- (11) calorie-conscious vs. calorie-minded
- This recipe is highly recommended to *calorie-conscious* consumers.
  - For *calorie-minded* slimmers, try microwaving an apple after coring it.

The adjectival compounds in (11) contain the modifier *calorie*. Yet, they are not equal in usage, which is caused by construal. In (11a), the compound *calorie-conscious* means ‘aware of calories’. A *calorie-conscious* consumer is a consumer who is aware of or alert to calorie intake, that is, thinks about it. *Calorie-conscious* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *buyer*, *consumer*, *customer*, *purchaser*, *shopper*; food such as *collation*, *meal*, *menu*, *recipe*, *repast*, and so on. In (11b), the compound *calorie-minded* means ‘inclined towards calories’. A *calorie-minded slimmer* is a slimmer who is inclined towards or believes in calories and is anxious to follow the stipulations so as to lose weight. *Calorie-minded* collocates with nouns referring to people such as *devotee*, *fiend*, *follower*, *freak*, *slimmer*, and so on.

### Exercise 12.11

Paraphrase the following compound pairs, and discuss differences in meaning resulting from construal.

1. a. career-conscious \_\_\_\_\_  
b. career-minded \_\_\_\_\_

- |                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| 2. a. fashion-conscious | ----- |
| b. fashion-minded       | ----- |
| 3. a. profit-conscious  | ----- |
| b. profit-minded        | ----- |
| 4. a. safety-conscious  | ----- |
| b. safety-minded        | ----- |

### 12.2.7 Awareness vs. undesirable inclination

Compound pairs which are constituents of the domain of **disposition** can be formed by sharing a modifier. Notwithstanding the shared modifier, each compound serves a different function. The distinction in their function is illustrated by the notions of awareness and undesirable inclination. Awareness is conveyed by N-conscious compounds, which mean knowing that something exists. They mean aware of the thing conveyed by the modifier. They imply focusing attention on something to avoid its occurrence. Undesirable inclination is conveyed by N-prone compounds, which mean tending to do, or being affected by, something bad. Such compounds are the opposite of -minded, and mean susceptible to the thing conveyed by the modifier. They imply either being easily influenced by something undesirable or having a fancy for it. A search of their collocations backs up the distinction. Nouns following N-conscious compounds refer to people or companies and their strategies. Nouns following N-prone compounds refer to people who are either reckless or powerless. This distinction is clearly illuminated by a compound pair like:

- (12) accident-conscious vs. accident-prone
- a. *Accident-conscious* mechanisms must be put in place.
  - b. The girl is always falling over, she is *accident-prone*.

The adjectival compounds in (12) contain the modifier *accident*. Yet, they are far from being equal, which is triggered by construal. In (12a), the compound *accident-conscious* means ‘aware of accident’. An *accident-conscious mechanism* is a mechanism of doing something in which people are aware of what is happening around them. *Accident-conscious* collocates with nouns referring to people; companies; plans aimed at achieving goals such as *blueprint*, *design*, *mechanism*, *policy*, *strategy*, and so on. In (12b), the compound *accident-prone* means ‘susceptible to accident’. An *accident-prone person* is a person who is susceptible to accidents, or has a greater than average number of accidents,

either because she is awkward or clumsy or because she has personality traits that predispose her to accidents. *Accident-prone* collocates with nouns referring to people.

Exercise 12.12

Analyse the meaning of the following compound pair, and provide sentences to justify your analysis.

- a. injury-conscious

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- b. injury-prone

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Summary

In this chapter, I substantiated the construal theory in the semantic description of pairs of compounds sharing an element. **Construal** is a way the speaker conceives and expresses a situation. The difference is due to the ability of the speaker to conceive a situation in alternate ways and use different morphological units to express them. Even when compound pairs look alike, they are not synonymous. They differ semantically relative to the different construals they represent. The meaning of a compound is explained in terms of the construal imposed on a situation, which is morphologically encoded by the use of a particular element. Their alternation spells out semantic differences. One useful tool for explaining alternation is **perspective**, the viewpoint which the speaker takes of a situation. So, the pairs of compounds are not free variants; they are treated as being unequal in meaning, and so distinctive in use. Each compound has its own individuality that requires recognition. Each compound is assigned a special function to carry out in language. Evidence in support of the differences comes from **collocation**, the tendency of words to occur together in a text.

In Table 12.1, the semantic distinctions and their representative compounds are summarized.

**Table 12.1** The semantic distinctions signalled by compounds

Construals	
Distinctions	Representatives
category vs. pattern	N-type vs. N-style
direction vs. destination	N-ward vs. N-bound
mobility vs. restriction	N-based vs. N-bound
sudden vs. chronic	N-stricken vs. N-ridden
permanent vs. temporary	N-less vs. N-free
awareness vs. desirable inclination	N-conscious vs. N-minded
awareness vs. undesirable inclination	N-conscious vs. N-prone

# Appendices

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## 1 Etymology of affixes

English		French		Greek		Latin	
Prefix	Suffix	Prefix	Suffix	Prefix	Suffix	Prefix	suffix
be-	-dom	counter-	-cy	a(n)-		ab-	-able
en-	-ed		-(e)ry	anti-		ante-	-age
fore-	-en		-ity	hyper-		contra-	-al
mid-	-er			macro-		de-	-ce
mis-	-ful			mega-		dis-	-ant
un-	-hood			micro-		in-	-ary
under-	-ing			pseudo-		inter-	-ate
	-ish					intra-	-ee
	-ly					mal-	-ify
	-ness					maxi-	-ible
	-ous					mini-	-ic
	-ship					non-	-ical
	-some					post-	-(i)an
	-ster					pre-	-ion
	-y					quasi-	-ise
						semi-	-ism
						sub-	-ist
						super-	-ive
						sur-	-ment
						ultra-	-ory
							-ure

## 2 Theories of morphology

<b>Formal Morphology</b> <b>The building-block conception</b>	<b>Cognitive Morphology</b> <b>The scaffolding conception</b>
<p>1 Morphology is the study of the way composite words are segmented into discrete subparts, called building blocks. For example, <i>in-</i> and <i>secure</i> are the building blocks of the composite word <i>insecure</i>. A composite word is seen as made up of separate subparts, which are combined according to certain rules. The rules link the subparts in accordance with structural parameters.</p> <p>2 The construction of a composite word and the means to assemble its subparts is carried out independently of the language user. Building a word out of blocks is analogous to building a house out of bricks. Morphology is seen as a matter of objective composition. The subparts are looked upon like objects, which stand in fixed relationships to one another independently of the speaker or writer who uses them.</p> <p>3 The task of the morphologist is to identify the subparts of composite words and arrange them together in some appropriate fashion. The central concern is to describe the relationships between the subparts of composite words in structural terms. The goal is to pin down the devices which condition the ability of the subparts of composite words to combine.</p>	<p>1 Morphology is the study of the semantic relationships between the subparts of composite words. For example, the subparts <i>in-</i> and <i>secure</i> are semantic elements which are integrated to form the composite word <i>insecure</i>. A composite word is seen as a network interrelated by semantic principles and affected by valence determinants, where the subparts serve to motivate selected facets of its meaning.</p> <p>2 The construction of a composite word is produced by the language user on the basis of general schemas. The subparts of a composite word are mere scaffolding for the job of word construction. Morphology is seen as a matter of conceptual composition. It is a network in the mental lexicon, where the subparts are activated and lexically interrelated by the speaker or writer who uses them.</p> <p>3 The task of the morphologist is to identify the contributions made by the subparts to the overall meanings of composite words. The central concern is to describe the relationships between the subparts of composite words in semantic terms. The goal is to pin down the principles which associate the subparts of composite words in expressing a given situation.</p>

### 3 Cognitive tenets of meaning

- 1 *Lexical items form categories of interrelated senses.* In Cognitive Grammar, lexical descriptions are built on the category theory. In view of this theory, a lexical item forms a category of interrelated semantic senses. The category contains peripheral zones situated around a conceptual centre. The conceptual centre of a category, termed the prototype, is the most representative or most salient instance of the category. The peripheral zones include the remaining instances which are derived from the conceptual centre via semantic extensions. The senses gain membership in the category based on their similarity rather than identity to the centre. They need not have all of the attributes of the centre. That is, they may not conform rigidly to the conceptual centre. Some of the attributes of the centre may appear to be optional at the periphery.
- 2 *Lexical items gather together in cognitive domains.* In Cognitive Grammar, lexical relationships are characterised in terms of the domain theory. In light of this theory, the meaning of a lexical item cannot be understood independently of the domain with which it is associated. A domain is a knowledge structure or a conceptual entity with respect to which the meaning of a lexical item can be described. A domain contains a set of facets, each of which describes a certain human experience and each of which is realised by a lexical item. To understand the meaning of an item, it is necessary to associate it with the appropriate facet within a domain. The lexical items which occupy different facets are not in complementary distribution. A close investigation of their behaviour makes it clear they have distinct meanings.
- 3 *Lexical items embody alternative construals of content.* In Cognitive Grammar, lexical interpretation is described according to the construal theory. By virtue of this theory, the meaning of a lexical item is identified in terms of the way it is construed. The meaning of a lexical item is the function of both conceptual content and construal. Conceptual content is the property inherent in a situation. Construal is the ability of the speaker to conceptualize a situation differently and use different lexical items to represent them in discourse. Two lexical items may share the same content, but differ in terms of the alternate ways the speaker construes their common content. In each alternative, the speaker focuses on a particular aspect of the situation. Each alternative is realised in language differently.

## 4 Representative approaches

Formal Morphology	Cognitive Morphology
<p>1 Item-and-Process</p> <p>In this approach, which is alternatively called Lexeme-based morphology, a composite word is formed by deriving its surface form from an underlying base by means of rules. The form of a composite word is analysed as being the result of applying rules to its deep structure to transform it into its surface structure. For instance, the composite word <i>indirect</i> is the result of the root <i>direct</i> and a transformation that adds <i>in-</i> to it. Transformations do not change meaning, and so the resulting variations are similar. Derivatives such as <i>uninterpreted</i> vs. <i>misinterpreted</i> which share the same deep structures are semantically equivalent. Alternative affixes are treated as interchangeable. Accordingly, this approach does not provide a convincing account of word formation. Because it ignores meaning in word formation, it is considered ineffective.</p>	<p>1 Morphology-as-Connections</p> <p>In this approach, morphology is represented as connections between words in the lexicon. This approach is applied to inflection, in which it is found that composite words have multiple connections varying in strength. High frequency words undergo less analysis than low frequency words, which are stored in terms of their parts. An inflectional rule is simply a relationship which is established in long-term memory. It can be reduced to the arrangement of memorised items in mental storage. However, this approach lacks in explicitness. Whereas it works for inflectional morphology well, it is not possible to determine its efficacy in accounting for derivational data. It is still a mystery how it explains the derivation of a pair from a common base and account for the semantic difference between the pair members.</p>
<p>2 Item-and-Arrangement</p> <p>In this approach, which is alternatively called Morpheme-based morphology, a word is built up by inserting morphemes into appropriate positions within it. The form of a word is analysed as consisting of a set of morphemes arranged in sequence by rules. For instance, the composite word <i>carelessness</i> is made up of the root morpheme <i>care</i>, and the affixes <i>-less</i> and <i>-ness</i>, which are selected from the lexicon and placed after each other like beads on a string. This approach does not fare any better. It does not provide a clear account which would justify the presence of irregular data. Its inefficiency can be immediately detected when it comes to a lexical pair like <i>uninterpreted</i> vs. <i>misinterpreted</i>. In such cases, it begs the question of what motivates the occurrence of two prefixes on the same base.</p>	<p>2 Category-Domain-Construal</p> <p>In this approach, which is applied in this book, a composite word is formed by integrating the meanings of its subparts. The morphological structure of a composite word mirrors its semantic structure. To understand a composite word, three steps seem necessary. (1) The contribution that a given affix makes to the overall composite word. The affix is the most important part because it is responsible for the character of the word. (2) The specific meaning which a given affix acquires relative to the facet within the domain which it represents. (3) The circumstances under which a given affix is used, which is determined by the construal the speaker uses to describe a scene. Therefore, words which take two or more affixes code different meanings. In each alternative, the affix represents a discrete construal.</p>



## 5 Status of morphology

- 1 In Traditional Grammar, morphology was of central concern. Linguists were engaged in comparing the morphological subsystems of languages with a view to establishing the genetic relationships between them or postulating their types. Interest in word formation had gone hand-in-hand with interest in language in general. Panini provided a detailed description of Sanskrit word formation. Jespersen devoted a significant proportion of his works to the study of word formation. There is a relationship between the form and meaning of a morphological unit. An affix has a semantic value of its own, which is associated with a certain concept. The concept is directly correlated with its morphological representation. The choice of an affix is predictable; it shifts the meaning of the formation to a new direction. Rival affixes are therefore distinctive in meaning and the resulting morphological formations are dissimilar in meaning.
- 2 In Structural Grammar, morphology was not paid maximum attention. Linguists were mainly concerned with phonology: segments of speech, their distribution and relationship to one another. The distinction between synchrony and diachrony drawn by Saussure precluded the study of word formation, where the two aspects are most fruitfully considered together. Word formation received slight attention. There was an obvious gap not to have made provision for treating word formation. There is no relationship between the form and meaning of a morphological unit. Morphological forms are analysed without reference to their semantic values. An affix is considered meaningless; it is summoned simply to derive a new word. The choice of an affix is arbitrary, in which the base and the affix co-occur by chance. The presence of rival affixes is a matter of coincidence, and the existence of the resulting alternatives is an instance of synonymy.
- 3 In Transformational Grammar, morphology swung between neglect and attention. In the early works on grammar, morphology was neglected. There was no place for the study of word formation because the focus was on syntax. In the later works on grammar, morphology was given some attention. In this respect, two trends exist. For the first trend, there is no relationship between the form and meaning of a morphological unit. Morphological forms are analysed independently of their semantic values. The choice of an affix is unprincipled. Rival affixes are interchangeable; their presence is a matter of idiosyncrasy. A word pair is treated as synonymous. It has one deep structure and the surface differences are the result of meaning-preserving transformations. For the second trend, morphological units cannot be governed by purely transformational rules. Rather, they should be governed by specific considerations which mediate the relationship between the base and the affix. The members of a pair are hypothesised to be more or less different. Rival suffixes are treated as substitutable, and the choice between them is explained in terms of morphological, phonological and semantic considerations.
- 4 In Functional Grammar, morphology received little attention. Linguists were primarily concerned with developing the pragmatic and semantic components. Little attention was given to the internal structure of words. Most attention was given instead to the internal structure of sentences, i.e. with how pragmatic, syntactic and semantic functions account for their derivation. However, there are a few studies where morphological issues had been discussed or alluded to. Applied to word formation, one can adduce that there is a relationship between the form and meaning of a morphological unit. Morphological forms correlate with differences in meaning. An affix is considered meaningful. The choice of an affix is motivated, whose use is a response to discourse pressure. Rival affixes are distinct in meaning. They are considered the locus of the difference in meaning. The resulting formations are therefore distinct. There is a connection between the context and the type of affix used.

5 In Cognitive Grammar, morphology, lexicon and syntax form a continuum which is describable in terms of symbolic structures, each comprising a semantic and a phonological structure linked by a symbolic structure. Morphology is therefore symbolic in the sense that it reduces to form-meaning pairings. Morphology is an important aspect of language. It studies the patterns used to form new words and concerned with the semantic principles that account for morphological forms. There is an intimate relationship between the form and meaning of a morphological unit. Morphological forms are determined by semantic principles. There is a direct mapping from a semantic structure to a morphological structure. An affix has a semantic distinction of its own. The choice of an affix is determined by construal, the way a situation is described. Rival affixes are not in complementary distribution. Nor are the derivational pairs they give rise to in free variation. Affixes are distinctive in use and the derivatives they form are distinctive in meaning. They reflect different dimensions of construal.

# Further Reading

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# Glossary

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**accommodation** The phenomenon in which one substructure adjusts to another to form a composite structure. In compounds, one substructure, usually the head, adjusts its meaning to that of the other, the modifier, so as to serve a different need in communication. The word *hand* refers to the part of the body at the end of the arm which is used for holding, moving or feeling things. In *hour hand*, however, the meaning of *hand* accommodates itself to the meaning of *hour* to refer to a pointer, the shorter hand of a clock or watch which points to the hours.

**acronymy** A morphological device in which a new word is coined from the initial letters of a succession of words, as in UN from United Nations.

**adjectivalization** The process of deriving a new adjective from other word classes, especially from nouns and verbs. For example, *foolish* is an adjectivalization from the noun *fool*, and *breakable* is an adjectivalization from the verb *break*.

**adjectival prefix/adjectivalizer/adjective-forming prefix** A bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to derive a new adjective. In the example *semicircular*, the bound morpheme *semi-* functions as an adjectival prefix deriving an adjective from the adjective *circular*.

**adjectival suffix/adjectivalizer/adjective-forming suffix** A bound morpheme which is added to the end of a free morpheme to derive a new adjective. In the example *forgivable*, the bound morpheme *-able* functions as an adjectival suffix deriving an adjective from the verb *forgive*.

**affix** A bound morpheme that is added to a root or base to derive a new word with a new meaning. English affixes are either **prefixes** or **suffixes**. For example, *unfairness* consists of the root *fair*, the prefix *un-* and the suffix *-ness*.

**affixation** The morphological process of deriving a new word by adding an affix, namely a bound morpheme, to a root or base. For example, the verb *widen* is formed by adding the affix *-en* to the adjective *wide*. Affixation comprises two modes: **prefixation** and **suffixation**.

**allomorph** A variant form of a morpheme which differs only in sound, not in meaning. It is an alternative manifestation of a morpheme which varies in pronunciation according to phonological conditions. For examples, the forms /in/, /im/, /ir/ and /il/ are allomorphs of the negative prefix *in-*. Their uses are conditioned by the initial sounds of the roots to which *in-* is attached. They are, thus, in **complementary distribution**.

**ambiguity** The case when one and the same lexical item can be interpreted in two or more ways. In word formation, compounds can be ambiguous in isolation. The ambiguity arises when they have more than one reading. For example, the word *doormat* has two readings. In the first, it means 'a piece of thick material which is put on the floor by a door and used to clean shoes'. In the second, it means 'a person who accepts being treated badly and does not complain'.

**analogy** The process by which a linguistic item is created on the basis of an appropriate pattern, i.e. schema, which exists in the language. Compounds, for example, can be composed by analogy, with each having a new semantic value, as in *sea breeze*, *sea dog*, *sea lane*, *sea level*, *sea wall*, etc.

**analysability** The principle which refers to the process of matching up the substructures of a composite structure phonologically and semantically. It refers to the ability of the speaker to recognize the phonological and semantic contributions made by the component substructures to the composite structure. Morphological expressions undergo two types of analysability: **full analysability** and **partial analysability**.

**authenticity** The quality of linguistic units being real or true, conforming to fact and therefore worthy of belief.

**autonomous structure** A structure that exists on its own without need of a dependent structure to complete its meaning. In the word *dangerous*, for example, the structure *danger* can stand by itself, and so does not need the structure *-ous* to complete its meaning.

**back formation** A morphological device whereby a new word is coined from an existing one by removing actual or supposed affixes, as in *televise* which is formed by deleting the suffix *-ion* from *television*.

**base** A morpheme that consists of a root and a derivational affix to which a further derivational affix can be added. The word *acceptable* functions as a base for a prefix like *un-* to give the new word *unacceptable*.

**blending** A morphological device by which a new word is coined by combining parts of two words, usually the first part of one with the last part of another. For example, *smash* is a blend of *smack* and *mash*.

**bound morpheme** A morpheme which cannot stand alone as a word. It can only appear as part of another word. In *rebuild*, for example, the derivational morpheme *re-* is a bound morpheme.

**categorization** The mental act of grouping together the numerous senses of a lexical item into a category. In the cognitive approach to language, categorization is based on prototypes.

**category** A network of distinct but related senses of a given lexical item. The senses gather around a prototype, are defined by their resemblance to it, and are arranged in terms of distance from it.

**clipping** A morphological device whereby a new word is coined by retaining only one of its parts without changing its meaning: the beginning as in *memo* from *memorandum*, the end as in *phone* from *telephone*, or the middle as in *flu* from *influenza*.

**coercion** The phenomenon in which a substructure brings about a change in the specification of a neighbouring substructure when they combine to form a composite structure. For example, the adjectival suffix *-ive* coerces the /t/ in *submit* into /s/ in *submissive*.

**cognition** The mental faculty of acquiring knowledge by the use of intuition, perception or reasoning.

**cognitive morphology** A branch of linguistics which studies the cognitive aspects of word formation. It is an approach to morphological description which is based on our understanding of the cognitive processing in the human brain in forming words or establishing morphological patterns.

**cognitive operations** Processes which describe capabilities of the mind or functions of the brain in producing and interpreting morphological expressions. They include **categorization**, **configuration** and **conceptualization**.



**collocation** The habitual co-occurrence of words. It is the case when two or more words go together and form a common expression.

**complement** An autonomous substructure that elaborates a schematic entity in the semantic structure of a dependent head. It adds intrinsic conceptual substance to the head. In *singer*, for example, the substructure *-er* is the dependent head, whereas the substructure *sing* is its complement.

**complementary distribution** The phenomenon in which linguistic forms have the same meaning but cannot occur in the same environment due to phonological conditions. Relative to the initial sound of the host root, the prefix *in-* is pronounced as /in/, /im/, /ir/ or /il/. These forms are allomorphs of the same morpheme, and thus in complementary distribution.

**composite/complex/polymorphemic word** A word that is composed of two or more substructures, which is morphologically divisible. The composite word *approval*, for example, is composed of the lexical substructures *approve* and *-al*. The compound *bodyguard* is a combination of the lexical substructures *body* and *guard*.

**compositionality** The principle that the meaning of a complex expression is thought of as being assembled from the meanings of its component parts. Morphological expressions undergo two types of compositionality: **full compositionality** and **partial compositionality**.

**compound** A composite structure that is made up of two, or more, free morphemes or substructures. For example, *shipyard* is a compound made up of the free morphemes *ship* and *yard*.

**compounding/composition** The morphological process of forming a composite structure or a new word by combining two, or more, free morphemes. The free morphemes can be nouns, adjectives or verbs.

**concatenation** The mechanism of building words by the linear combination of morphemes. It includes the two powerful processes of word formation: derivation and compounding. The subject dealing with this area is called **concatenative morphology**. Creating new words by other processes than derivation or compounding is called **non-concatenative morphology**.

**concept** An abstract idea or a mental representation, which is realized in language by means of symbolic structures. It is a general idea that exists in the mind as a product of mental activity or awareness.

**conceptualization** The mental act of perceiving, comprehending and describing a given situation in alternate ways. In *shoe leather*, the speaker conceptualizes the leather of which shoes are made. In *leather shoe*, by contrast, the speaker conceptualizes the shoes which are made of leather.

**configuration** The mental act of grouping together a number of lexical items into a cognitive domain. The lexical items share the same conceptual area but differ in the specifics. For example, the affixes *-like*, *-oid*, *para-*, *mock-* and *neo-* can be grouped into a domain termed 'similarity'.

**constituency** The order in which substructures are successively integrated to yield a composite structure. In *unthinkable*, for example, first the substructure *-able* is integrated and second the substructure *un-* is integrated.

**construal** The ability of the speaker to conceive and express a situation in different ways. It is the ability to conceptualize a situation in different ways and use different linguistic expressions to represent them in discourse.

**context** It is the immediate linguistic environment of an expression, the preceding and/or following items in the linear order. It is the best evidence available in accounting for the meaning of an expression.

**conventional** The quality of linguistic structures being established in the lexicon through repeated uses.

**conventionality** The quality of linguistic units being established in the lexicon through repeated uses.

**conversion/zero derivation** A morphological device wherein a new word is coined from an existing word without the use of affixes. It involves a change in part of speech, as in the verb *to house* from the noun *house*, or in its tone or stress, as in the verb *pro* 'test from the noun 'protest.

**corpus** A large amount of written or spoken data collected to show the state of a language. The main purpose of a corpus is to verify a hypothesis about language. Precisely, it serves to identify the exact behaviour of a linguistic item.

**creativity** The ability of language users to coin a novel expression from a conventional expression, or construe the same situation in alternate ways using different linguistic expressions.

**dependent structure** A structure that is dependent on an autonomous structure to complete its meaning. The autonomous structure fills the semantic hole that the dependent substructure has. In *dangerous*, for example, the structure *-ous* cannot stand by itself, and so depends on the structure *danger* to complete its meaning.

**derivation** The morphological process of forming a new word from an existing one by the addition of a bound morpheme. Derivation assigns a lexical item a semantic property so that it can fulfil a new function in discourse. Within derivation, there are two branches of morphological process: derivation by **affixation** and derivation by **non-affixation**.

**derivational morpheme** A bound morpheme by means of which a new word is derived from a free morpheme. The branch of morphology concerned with this process is called **derivational morphology**.

**derivative** A word which is derived from another word by means of derivational affixes. It is a word that is derived as a result of a morphological process. For example, *legality* is a derivative of *legal*.

**domain** A knowledge background in terms of which the meanings of lexical items can be properly described. The knowledge is based on experiences derived from beliefs, customs and practices. For example, the affixes *-like*, *-oid*, *para-*, *mock-* and *neo-* gather under the domain of 'similarity'. Yet, each occupies a specific facet, and so has meaning of its own.

**elaboration site/e-site** The hole within the semantic structure of a dependent substructure, which is filled by an autonomous substructure. For example, the dependent substructure *-er* needs an autonomous substructure denoting process like *run* to complete its meaning. Process is, therefore, the semantic hole which is filled by the autonomous structure *run*.

**endocentric compound** A type of compound in which one member functions as the head and the other as its modifier. It is a compound that denotes a hyponym of the head. In a *nightclub*, for example, the word *night* is the modifier while the word *club* is the head. A *nightclub* is a type of club.

**endocentricity** The case in which the meaning of a compound is a specialization of the meaning of its head.

**exocentric compound** A type of compound which lacks a head. It does not denote a hyponym of the head, but some feature of the entity which is denoted by the compound as whole. For example, a *highbrow* does not denote a type of brow, but a type of person who has intellectual or erudite tastes.

**exocentricity** The case in which the meaning of a compound is not a specialization of the meaning of its head. Since the head is not explicitly expressed, the meaning of the compound is accounted for by means of encyclopaedic knowledge.

**expressive** The property of linguistic structures conveying special meanings. For example, *pro-* is a linguistic structure which expresses the meaning of 'supporting or approving' in an expression like *pro-democracy*.

**facet** A portion of a domain which is associated with a particular concept. Any facet is expressed by an appropriate form of language. For example, the suffixes *-ling*, *-ette*, *-kin* and *-let* can be grouped into the domain of 'diminution'. Yet, each represents a distinct facet. The suffix *-ling* is used to describe persons, animals or plants, as in *princeling*. The suffix *-ette* is used to describe places or works of literature, as in *kitchenette*. The suffix *-kin* is used to describe fabric, as in *napkin*. The suffix *-let* is used to describe things, as in *booklet*.

**form** The phonological sound or orthographic shape of a word which is used to describe or identify something. It is distinct from meaning, the idea that is intended.

**free morpheme** A morpheme which can appear as an independent word. It can stand alone as a complete word. In *rebuild*, for example, the substructure *build* is a free morpheme, which is preceded by the bound morpheme *re-*.

**free variation** The phenomenon in which two or more linguistic items can occur in the same environment without signalling any change in meaning. For example, the bound morphemes *-ful* and *-able* can attach to *respect* to form *respectful* and *respectable*. Yet, they are not in free variation because they denote different meanings.

**full analysability** The case when the phonological substructures of a composite structure match up, one to one, with their semantic substructures. The compound *hilltop* is considered fully analysable. At the phonological level, the speaker can divide it into the substructures *hill* and *top*. At the semantic level, the speaker can identify the contribution made by each substructure. A *hilltop* is the top part of a hill.

**full compositionality** The case when the meaning of a composite structure is fully determined by the meanings of its substructures and the manner in which they are combined. For example, the meaning of the compound *briefcase* is a combination of the meanings of the modifier and the head: a case used for carrying brief.

**head** A central element within an expression that determines its word class and hence is responsible for its syntactic character. In *widen*, for example, the *-en* is regarded as the head because it changes the resulting formation into a verb.

**inflection** A grammatical process which produces variants of the same word. It is a change in the form of a word, usually by adding a morpheme, to signal a change in its grammatical function. The area concerned with this process is called **inflectional morphology**. For example, the inflectional ending *-s* in *books* indicates that the noun is plural, whereas the inflectional ending *-s* in *sells* indicates that the verb is the third person singular.

**inseparability** The property which describes two things as being so closely connected that they cannot be considered separately. In word formation, compounds are considered inseparable. The compound *footwear*, for example, does not allow the insertion of a lexical item as in *\*foot tough wear*.

**instances** Specific units which are frequently used. They are regarded as the matrix on the basis of which schemas are built. For example, the words *enable*, *enchant*, *encircle*, *enclave*, *enclose*, etc. represent instances on the basis of which the schema [EN-] is established.

**integration** The combination of morphological substructures into a linear sequence. The integration process is conditioned by parameters such as correspondence, dependence, determinacy and constituency.

**interpretation** The mental representation of the meaning of something. In Linguistics, it refers to the assignment of meaning to language symbols.

**inventory** The linguistic resources or symbolic structures of a given language which speakers exploit in constructing units for serving particular purposes.

**language** A system for communicating ideas and feelings about the world using symbols which consist of form-meaning pairings. Symbols can be subparts of words like *-ant* as in *contestant*, whole words as in *contest*, or strings of words as in *He is a contestant*.

**language user** A member of a particular linguistic community who uses language for the sake of communication. The user of a human language can be either a speaker or a writer.

**lexeme** A unit of lexical meaning which can take a set of inflectional endings. For example, *short*, *shorter*, *shortest* are all word forms which can realize the lexeme *short* under appropriate grammatical conditions.

**lexical item** An item of vocabulary, a word or a sequence of words, which has semantic interpretation and embodies a distinct concept.

**lexicology** A branch of linguistics which studies the lexicon of a language. It studies the meanings of words, word groups and idiomatic combinations.

**lexicon** The mental dictionary of a language user, which consists of his/her stock of lexical expressions: their forms, meanings and grammatical properties.

**linguistics** The scientific study of language. It studies the cognitive processes involved in producing and understanding language.

**matrix** A set of domains which provide the context for the full understanding of a morpheme. In each domain, the morpheme occupies a distinct context, indicates a different meaning, and makes a different contribution to language. For an accurate description of its meaning, the prefix *dis-* evokes the domains of reversal, removal, privation, etc.

**meaning** The idea associated with a linguistic form. It is the message that is intended, expressed or signified. It is the concept that a linguistic item or a grammatical pattern is about.

**modifier** A dependent substructure that has a hole in its semantic structure which is filled by the profile determinant. It adds non-intrinsic specifications to the profile determinant. In *airfield*, for example, the substructure *field* functions as a profile determinant, whereas the substructure *air* functions as a dependent modifier and is extrinsic to the meaning of *field*.

**morpheme** The minimal meaningful unit in a language. It is minimal because it cannot be further divided into smaller units. It is meaningful in that it stands for something conceived in the speaker's mind. Morphemes can be either **free** or **bound**.

**morphological expression** A general term which subsumes simple and composite words. A simple word, e.g. *care*, is composed of only one lexical structure, which is morphologically indivisible. A composite word, e.g. *careful*, is composed of two or more substructures, which is morphologically divisible.

**morphology** A branch of linguistics which studies the form-meaning relationships between lexical units and their arrangement in forming words. It is the study of word formation in a language, of how words are built of meaningful units. It studies the ways in which structure alterations reflect meaning distinctions.

**negative prefix** A bound morpheme which is added in front of a semantically-positive free morpheme to form its negative form. In *non-partisan*, the bound morpheme *non-* is a negative prefix.

**nominalization** The process of deriving a new noun from other word classes, especially from verbs and adjectives. For example, *reservation* is a nominalization from the verb *reserve*, and *intensity* is a nominalization from the adjective *intense*.

**nominal prefix/nominalizer/noun-forming prefix** A bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to derive a new noun. In the example *mega-temple*, the bound morpheme *mega-* functions as a nominal prefix deriving a noun from a noun.

**nominal suffix/nominalizer/noun-forming suffix** A bound morpheme which is added to the end of a free morpheme to form a noun. In the example *performance*, the bound morpheme *-ance* functions as a nominal suffix deriving a noun from the verb *perform*.

**non-affixation** The morphological process of coining a new word by using a set of morphological devices such as **acronymy**, **back formation**, **blending**, **clipping** and **conversion**.

**number** The grammatical category of a word, especially a noun, that expresses count distinctions like singular and plural.

**pairing** The act of mating the phonological and semantic poles of a linguistic expression for communicative purposes.

**paradigm** The set of inflected forms which a lexeme assumes. The word *talk*, for example, produces the paradigm: *talk*, *talks* *talking* and *talked*.

**paradigmatic relationship** A pattern of relationship between the morphemes of a composite structure in a vertical order. It is based on the criterion of substitution, the ability of morphemes

to replace each other vertically within a particular context. For example, the bound morphemes *-ish* and *-y* can be used alternately after the root *freak* deriving *freakish* and *freaky*. Each derivative has a different meaning. The bound morphemes are, thus, in a paradigmatic relationship.

**partial analysability** The case when the phonological substructures of a composite structure fail to correspond with their semantic substructures. The compound *feather brain* is considered partially analysable. At the phonological level, the speaker can divide it into the substructures *feather* and *brain*. At the semantic level, the speaker cannot recognize the meanings of the substructures in the resulting structure. The meaning becomes clear when the speaker takes into consideration clues from context and encyclopaedic knowledge. *Feather brain* means a foolish person.

**partial compositionality** The case when the meaning of a composite structure is determined by both the semantic contribution of its substructures and the pragmatic knowledge behind what is actually symbolized. For example, in *walkman* the meaning is not only a function of the meanings of the modifier and head: a man who walks, but rather a type of personal stereo: a small cassette player, with small headphones.

**periphery** The senses of a morpheme, regular and irregular, which are linked to its prototype via semantic extensions. They are defined by their resemblance to the prototype, and so arranged in terms of distance from it.

**perspective** The viewpoint the speaker takes of a scene or situation which differs relative to the communicative needs.

**polysemous** A word or a morpheme which has multiple, related meanings. The senses are usually distinguished according to the contexts in which the word or morpheme is used. For example, the morpheme *-al* can refer to (1) relation as in *postal*, (2) proportion as in *colossal*, (3) location as in *marginal*, among others. The notion which covers this is called **polysemy**.

**positive prefix** A bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to form a new word. In *pre-view*, the bound morpheme *pre-* is a positive prefix.

**prefix** A bound morpheme that is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to form a new composite word, of either a similar or different word class, with a new meaning. In the example *enslave*, the prefix *en-* modifies the root *slave* and changes it from a noun into a verb.

**prefixation** The morphological process of forming a new word by attaching a bound morpheme to the front of a free morpheme. The word *incomplete*, for example, is formed by prefixation, by adding the prefix *in-* to the root *complete*.

**profile determinant/head** The substructure which lends its profile to the entire composite structure. It is that element in a construction which is central because it is primarily responsible for the character of the construction, and because it is in syntactic and semantic relationship with the other elements. In *joinery*, for example, the *-ery* is regarded as the profile determinant.

**prototype** The central sense or the most salient example of a morpheme. It is the sense that comes to mind first and is the most frequent in the category. It serves as an ideal example from which the peripheral senses are derived via semantic extensions.

**reversibility** The property which refers to the alteration of the normal order of things in either direction. In word formation, compounds display reversibility in that the positions of their

substructures can be exchanged, which consequently entails a difference in reference, as in *horserace* and *racehorse*.

**rival morpheme** A bound morpheme that is in competition with another in the formation of a word from the same root or base but carries a different message. For example, the suffixes *-ity* and *-ism* can be used after the root *humane* to produce the nouns *humanity* and *humanism*. The suffixes act as rivals. Each has a distinct meaning. The noun *humanity* refers to the mode of being humane. *Humanity* is the condition of being kind to people or animals by making sure that they do not suffer more than is necessary. The noun *humanism* refers to the philosophy of asserting the intrinsic worth of humans and rejecting religious beliefs. *Humanism* is a system of thought which considers solving human problems by means of reason rather than religious beliefs.

**rivalry** The competition between two or more morphemes to convey a different message. Bound morphemes which attach to the same root or base profile distinct aspects of its meaning.

**root** The basic form of a morpheme from which another is derived by the addition of derivational morphemes. It is a word substructure that cannot be decomposed into further elements. In *disability*, for example, the root is *able*. It is the form which remains after removing all the affixes.

**schema** A pattern which is specified in general terms and elaborated by its instances in detailed ways. It is a mental representation with a general meaning, whose specifics are elaborated by its instances in contrasting ways. For example, the schema [EN-] is elaborated by such instances in English as *enable*, *enchant*, *encircle*, *enclave*, *enclose*, etc.

**semanticity** The ability of linguistic units, be they simple phrases or complete sentences, to convey meaning by means of symbols.

**semantic principles** Basic generalizations accepted as true and used as a basis for the description or classification of morphological items.

**simple/monomorphemic word** A word that is composed of only one lexical structure, which is morphologically indivisible. The word *sense*, for example, consists of just one lexical constituent. It is the minimum free form which can stand by itself and act as a meaningful utterance.

**stress** The greater force with which a syllable is pronounced in an utterance. It is the relative emphasis that is given to certain syllables in a word.

**structured** At the grammar level, it is the property of units being related to one another in organized ways. At the unit level, it is the manner of construction and the arrangement of distinct parts to build up a cohesive whole.

**substance** The aspect of an expression which consists of two parts, form and meaning. The form is the phonological representation. The meaning is the idea conventionally associated with it.

**suffix** A bound morpheme that is added to the end of a free morpheme to form a new composite word, of either a similar or different word class, and give it essential meaning. In the example *rainy*, the suffix *-y* modifies the root *rain* and changes it from a noun into an adjective.

**suffixation** The morphological process of forming a new word by attaching a bound morpheme to the end of a free morpheme. The word *attendance*, for example, is formed by suffixation, by adding the suffix *-ance* to the root *attend*.

**symbolicity** The quality of linguistic units being associated with meaning. It is concerned with the relation between a structure in a phonological space and a structure in a semantic space. When such a relationship is built, it acquires unit status and forms a symbolic unit.

**synonymy** The state of equivalence in meaning. It is the semantic relation between two expressions whose meanings overlap in one or more of their senses. However, few synonyms mean exactly the same as one another.

**syntagmatic relationship** A pattern of relationship between the morphemes of a composite structure in a linear order. It is based on the criterion of juxtaposition, the ability of morphemes to combine horizontally. For example, the root *discern* can take the bound morphemes *in-* and *-ible* to form *indiscernible*. The morphemes are, thus, in a syntagmatic relationship.

**text** A body of spoken or written material which represents an extended unit of language. The meaning of a text can be derived from the context in which it occurs. It is a type of spoken or written discourse.

**unit** Any simple or composite expression which is frequently used and thoroughly mastered, thus acquiring the status of a habit or a cognitive routine.

**usage event** An actual utterance used to serve a particular purpose in communication. It has a unit-like status in that it represents the expression of a coherent idea, making use of the conventions of language, the norms of linguistic behaviour in a linguistic community.

**use** The employment of linguistic structures by the language user to describe a situation. It is the purpose for which the linguistic structures are employed.

**utterance** An actual instance of language use, a word, phrase or sentence, which is produced by a language user at a given time and place. Actual instances of language represent usage events. Utterances have grammatical forms, semantic structures, speech sounds, intonation patterns, etc.

**valence** The mechanism whereby two morphological substructures combine to form a composite structure. The integration of the component substructures depends on the sharing of some features between them.

**verbalization** The process of deriving a verb from other word classes, especially from nouns and adjectives. For example, *categorise* is a verbalization from the noun *category*, and *purify* is a verbalization from the adjective *pure*.

**verbal prefix/verbalizer/verb-forming prefix** A bound morpheme which is added to the beginning of a free morpheme to derive a verb. In the example *befriend*, the bound morpheme *be-* functions as a verbal prefix deriving a verb from the noun *friend*.

**verbal suffix/verbalizer/verb-forming suffix** A bound morpheme which is added to the end of a free morpheme to derive a verb. In the example *itemise*, the bound morpheme *-ise* functions as a verbal suffix deriving a verb from the noun *item*.

**word** A symbolic unit which has an identifiable meaning and a phonological shape. In morphology, it is a unit which consists of one or more morphemes, which can be **simple** or **composite**.



**word class/part of speech** Any of the classes, nouns, verbs, adjectives, determiners or prepositions, to which the lexical items of a language are allocated on the basis of their grammatical or morphological behaviour.

**word formation** A lexical process which produces new vocabulary items out of the existing ones. It enables speakers to create new words in response to new thoughts, experiences or situations. In the course of forming words, two major processes take place: **derivation** and **compounding**.

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