

A revolution in the history of affix-formation

This paper wants to show a revolutionary change in the origin of affixes in English: from a syntagmatic process to a paradigmatic one.

Traditionally, suffixes are considered to be the result of grammaticalization (Kastovsky 2009: 327), which runs from free form through part of a compound to an affix (Trips 2009), as for example in

(1) OE free form/noun hād	ME Compound child hōd	contemporary English derivative/suffix childhood
------------------------------	--------------------------	---

Kastovsky (2006: 152) describes a similar change: "The suffix *-ly* goes back to OE *-lic*, which was an independent noun meaning 'body, form'. Thus, *-lic*-formations started out as nominal compounds, but then developed an adjectival function (...). An OE formation *cildlic* was therefore structurally parallel to its Modern English equivalent *childlike*. From such adjectives, adverbs could be formed by adding the suffix *-e*, e.g. *cildlice*. In Early Middle English this *-e* was lost, and the suffix *-ly* also adopted an adverbial function as in *slowly*, *royally*, besides continuing to act as an adjective forming suffix, cf. *manly*, *princely* etc."

Since part of the development of these affixes goes through a syntagmatic process, compounding, this word-formation process is here called syntagmatic following Marchand's (1969²) footsteps. Essential to syntagmatic processes is that they make use of morphemes or words. In contemporary English, however, one finds numerous affixes or affix-like segments, whose origin is by no means a morpheme. These affixes are the result of what Zwicky (2010) calls libfixation. Libfixes are non-morphemic suffix-like word fragments that are 'liberated' from a longer formation and that can be productively used to form new paradigms of words. Examples are:

(2) -dar from radar gaydar jewdar humordar	(3) -gasm from orgasm wargasm nerdgasm shoegasm	(4) -wich from sandwich fishwich hamwich veggiewich
(5) Franken- from Frankenstein frankenfood frankenplant frankenscene	(6) glut- from gluten glutamine glutamate glutaminase	(7) heli- from helicopter heliport helibus helipad

Although the liberated segments, libfixes or splinters, in (4), (5) and possibly also in (7) might be described as a result of reinterpretation by naïve language users, such an explanation is impossible in the cases (2), (3) and (6). Nevertheless both groups of libfixes appear to be productive and are on their way to become affixes.

In this presentation, the following aspects will be discussed:

- systematicity of libfixation
- the problem or role of conscious word formation in language change
- the role of the paradigm and/of frequency in the origin of libfixes
- the relation between blending and libfixation
- the role of the model in productivity
- the difference between syntagmatic and paradigmatic affix-formation, which also discusses whether or not intermediate stages of affixoids are involved
- the consequences of paradigmatic affix-formation for the unidirectionality of (de)grammaticalization processes