



THE USE OF AFFIXATION IN CREATING NEW WORDS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

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Annotation: Language is constantly evolving, adapting to cultural, technological, and social changes. One of the most productive ways new words are formed in contemporary English is through affixation. Affixation refers to the process of adding prefixes, suffixes, or, less commonly, infixes to a base word to create new meanings. This article explores how affixation functions and why it remains essential in modern English word formation.

Key words: Affixation, word formation, prefixes, suffixes, C, morphology, contemporary English, vocabulary development.

Affixation is a morphological process in which an affix is attached to a root or base word to create a new word or modify its meaning. There are three primary types of affixes in English:

Prefixes: added to the beginning of a word (e.g., unhappy, redo)

Suffixes: added to the end of a word (e.g., happiness, teacher)

Infixes: inserted within a word (rare in English and mostly informal)

Each type serves a different function, contributing to the richness and flexibility of the English language.

Prefixes are widely used in contemporary English to modify meaning. They do not usually change the grammatical category of a word but instead add nuance.

For example:

un- indicates negation (unfair, unknown)

re- expresses repetition (rewrite, reuse)

pre- refers to something before (prepaid, preview)

In modern contexts, prefixes are especially common in digital communication, such as repost, unsubscribe, and preorder. These words reflect how language adapts to technological developments.

The Importance of Suffixes

Suffixes often change both the meaning and the grammatical function of a word. They are essential in forming nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

Examples include:

-ness (forms nouns): kindness, happiness

-er (indicates a person): teacher, writer



-ize (forms verbs): modernize, globalize

In contemporary English, suffixes are frequently used in academic and professional language. Words like digitalization, productivity, and influencer demonstrate how suffixation helps describe new concepts and roles in society.

Affixation in Contemporary Word Formation

The rapid development of technology and social media has accelerated the creation of new words. Affixation plays a key role in this process by allowing speakers to quickly adapt existing vocabulary.

Examples include:

connect → disconnect

friend → unfriend

happy → unhappiness

These examples show how affixation enables efficient communication without the need to invent entirely new root words.

Significance of Affixation

Affixation remains highly significant for several reasons. It:

Expands vocabulary in a systematic way

Helps language learners understand unfamiliar words

Reflects cultural and technological changes

Encourages creativity in language use

By mastering affixes, speakers and learners can both interpret and create a wide range of words with ease. Affixation in English can be divided into two important categories: derivational and inflectional affixation.

Derivational affixation creates new words and often changes the word class. For example, the verb teach becomes the noun teacher with the suffix -er. Similarly, happy becomes unhappy with the prefix un-. This type is highly productive in contemporary English. Inflectional affixation, on the other hand, does not create new words but modifies a word to express grammatical relationships such as tense, number, or comparison. Examples include walk → walked, cat → cats, and big → bigger. Although less creative, it is essential for correct grammar. Not all affixes are equally productive. Some are frequently used to create new words, while others are rarely used in modern contexts.

Highly productive affixes include:

un- (unfair, unkind)

-ness (happiness, kindness)

-er (teacher, driver)

Less productive affixes, such as -th (warmth, length), are mostly limited to older vocabulary. In contemporary English, productivity is influenced by social trends, especially technology and globalization. For instance, suffixes like -er and -ist are commonly used to describe new professions and identities,



such as blogger and activist. In conclusion, affixation is a vital and dynamic process in contemporary English. Through the use of prefixes and suffixes, new words are continuously formed to meet the demands of modern life. As society continues to evolve, affixation will remain an essential tool for linguistic innovation and expression.

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