



**AFFIXATION AS A HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE TYPE OF WORD  
FORMATION TYPES OF AFFIXES**

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**Annotation:** *This article explores affixation as a highly productive method of word formation in language, emphasizing its significance in expanding vocabulary. It defines affixation as the process of adding affixes to base words or stems to create new lexemes, thereby modifying their meanings or grammatical categories. The article categorizes affixes into five main types: prefixes, suffixes, infixes, circumfixes, and compound affixes, providing examples for each. It highlights the productivity of affixation in the creation of new terms, particularly in response to technological advancements and globalization. The article concludes by underscoring the role of affixation in the evolution of language, demonstrating its adaptability and capacity to reflect changing human experiences.*

**Key words:** *affixation, word formation, affixes, prefixes, suffixes, infixes, circumfixes, compound affixes, productivity, grammatical categories, globalization, vocabulary expansion, language evolution.*

Affixation is a fundamental morphological process that involves the addition of affixes to base words or stems, resulting in the formation of new lexemes. This process is characterized by its high productivity across numerous languages, facilitating the continuous expansion of vocabulary to encompass emerging concepts, objects, and ideas. Affixes have the capacity to modify the meaning of the original word, alter its grammatical category, or accomplish both.



The suffix -ation, for instance, is first documented between 1850 and 1855. During this period, other words such as "cloakroom," "heavyweight," "muggins," "overprint," and "runoff" also entered the English language. The suffix -ation is employed to form nouns from stems ending in -ate (e.g., "separation") and can also create nouns from stems of different origins (e.g., "starvation"). Additional examples of words utilizing the -ation suffix include "capitalization," "generalization," "reservation," "sensitization," and "transportation."

### Types of Affixes

Affixes are categorized into several types based on their functions and positional relationships to the root word. The primary types of affixes include:

1. Prefixes: These affixes are appended to the beginning of a root word and modify its meaning without altering its grammatical category. For example:

- The prefix "un-" in "unhappy" negates the adjective "happy."
- The prefix "re-" in "redo" indicates a repetition of the action denoted by the verb "do."

Many contemporary English words incorporate prefixes derived from Greek or Latin. Familiarity with the meanings of common prefixes can aid in deducing the definitions of unfamiliar words encountered in reading, particularly as prefixes can denote oppositional meanings, illustrated by the distinction between "possible" and "impossible." However, caution is warranted, as the same prefix may have multiple spellings (e.g., "pre-" and "pro-"), and some prefixes (e.g., "in-") can convey different meanings, such as "not" or "without" versus "in" or "into." Nonetheless, recognizing prefixes enhances vocabulary development and assists in deciphering unknown words.

2. Suffixes: Suffixes are affixes added to the end of a root word and can transform the grammatical category of a word, such as converting a noun into a verb or an adjective. For instance:

- The suffix "-ness" in "happiness" converts the adjective "happy" into a noun.
- The suffix "-able" in "readable" changes the verb "read" into an adjective.

Common suffixes generally retain similar meanings when added to words. For example, the suffix "-less," when appended to a noun, signifies "without," as seen



in "colorless" or "thoughtless." Nevertheless, certain suffixes may possess multiple meanings, necessitating careful consideration of the context and usage of the word. Moreover, suffixes may differ between American and British English.

3. Infixes: Infixes are less prevalent in English but involve the insertion of an affix within a root word. Infixation is more commonly found in other languages, such as Tagalog. For example, in Tagalog, the infix "-um-" can be inserted into the verb "sulat" (to write) to yield "sumulat" (to have written).

As the term implies, an infix is an affix incorporated within another word. This principle is occasionally exemplified in certain expressions employed by emotionally charged English speakers, such as "Hallebloodylujah!" In popular culture, infixation can manifest in casual contexts, as illustrated by a statement from Prince William's former nanny, who referred to the engagement between the Prince and Kate Middleton as "fan-flaming-tastic."

In summary, affixation is a vital morphological process that enriches language, allowing for nuanced expression and the continual adaptation of vocabulary to meet the demands of evolving communication.

4. Circumfixes: Circumfixes represent a specific category of affixes that are attached to both the beginning and the end of a base word or root, thereby altering its meaning. Unlike prefixes or suffixes, which are affixed to one end of a word, circumfixes encompass the root. For instance, in certain languages such as German, the circumfix "ge-...-t" is employed to form the past participle of regular verbs. The verb "spielen," meaning "to play," transforms into "gespielt," meaning "played" through this circumfix. Circumfixes are integral to word formation and grammatical structure in languages that employ this type of affixation.

5. Compound Affixes: Compound affixes are created by merging two or more individual affixes to form a new unit that attaches to a root word. This process is akin to compounding, which combines two complete words, but in this case, it involves the combination of affix units. For example, the combination of the compound affix "anti-" (meaning against) and "-ism" (denoting a belief or doctrine) results in the term "anti-





capitalism," which refers to a political and economic stance opposing capitalism. Other examples include:

- "Bio-" + "-logy" = "Biology": The study of living organisms.
- "Anti-" + "-social" = "Antisocial": A term describing behavior that contravenes social norms.
- "Inter-" + "-national" = "International": Pertaining to or involving multiple countries.
- "Eco-" + "-system" = "Ecosystem": A biological community interacting with its environment.

### Productivity of Affixation

The productivity of affixation is exemplified by the extensive range of words it generates. As new concepts arise, affixation facilitates the swift creation of terminology. For instance, in technological domains, novel terms such as "hyperlink" and "cloud computing" emerge by utilizing familiar prefixes and suffixes. A reliable method for identifying productive affixes is to observe their presence in neologisms and nonce words—terms coined and employed for specific occasions. These nonce words typically originate from contemporary speech and reflect the most productive and progressive patterns in word formation. It is important to distinguish the productivity of affixes from their frequency of occurrence; numerous high-frequency affixes are no longer actively used in word derivation (e.g., the native adjective-forming suffixes -ful and -ly, as well as Latin-derived adjective-forming suffixes such as -ant, -ent, and -al, which, despite their frequency, are not commonly employed in new formations).

Furthermore, affixation is pivotal in the evolution of language. With the globalization of English, many borrowed terms from other languages are adapted through affixation, enabling speakers to seamlessly incorporate foreign concepts into everyday discourse.

In summary, affixation is a highly productive mechanism of word formation that significantly enriches and enlivens language. By comprehending the various types of affixes and their functions, one can gain a deeper appreciation for the complexity of



word formation and the ongoing expansion of vocabulary in response to societal transformations and advancements. The capacity to create new words through affixation underscores the adaptability of language and its ability to reflect the ever-evolving nature of human experience.

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