

1 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries

Janet DeCesaris
Grup InfoLex
Universitat Pompeu Fabra

iula INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

2 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

Background

- Word-forming elements have long been included as headwords in some dictionaries of English
- Information presented about words in dictionaries does not always coincide with the information presented about words in grammars
- Different dictionaries provide quite different analyses of affixes
- Dictionaries aimed at native speakers often appeal to regularity in word-formation to explain why certain words are not included in the dictionary

iula INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

3 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

“Yet another group [of words that must be excluded] is composed of many substantive uses of adjectives, adjective uses of substantives (as of nouns of material), participial adjectives, verbal nouns ending in *-ing*, abstract nouns ending in *-ness*, adverbs ending in *-ly* from adjectives, adjectives ending in *-ish*, regular compounds, etc., which can be used at will in accordance with the established principles of the language, but which are too obvious, both in meaning and formation, and often too occasional in use, to need separate definition.”

from the *Preface to The Century Dictionary* by William Dwight Whitney

iula INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

4 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

Outline of talk

- Discuss briefly the view of word-formation in grammars
- Present data on word-forming elements from several dictionaries of English
- Identify tendencies and areas in which there is room for improvement in the representation of word-forming elements in dictionaries
- Comments on the relationship between dictionary representation and morphology in general

iula INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

5 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

View(s) of English word-formation in grammars

- Rule-governed behavior
 - Bound forms and non-bound forms
 - Precisely identify characteristics of the input and the output
 - Involves affixation, compounding, and conversion
 - Neoclassical compounding
 - Neoclassical bound roots combine with other neoclassical bound roots
 - Derivation and compounding can occur in different parts of the grammar
 - Rules account for existing forms and, if **productive**, account for newly created forms

iula INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

6 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

View(s) of English word-formation in grammars

- View of word-formation as a cline (Kastovsky 2009):

“[...]it can be argued that compounding, affixation, clipping and blending should be regarded as prototypical patterns arranged on a scale of progressively less independent constituents ranging from word via stem, affixoids, affix, curtailed word/stem to splinters as constituents of blends, and finally acronyms (letter combinations), i.e.

(12) compounding (word) > stem compounding (stem) > affixoids > affixation proper (word-/stem-based) > clipping compounds (clipping of words/stems) > blending > splinters > acronyms.”

iula INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

7 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Classification of word-forming elements in grammatical description

- Affixes
- Bound roots
- Words
- Can create a new affix from an existing word

Szymanek (2005) terms this phenomenon 'affix secretion', defined as "a case where a new affix has established itself because speakers start to perceive it in a group of borrowed words or because speakers reinterpret a particular existing word (which can be native or foreign). [...] Initially, the use of such a newly established affix may be attributed to analogy."

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA infolex

8 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Marchand, Hans (1960: 290)

- Semi-suffix elements "midway between full words and suffixes. Some are only used as second words of compounds, though their word character is still clearly recognizable."
 - *-like*
 - *-worthy*
 - *-monger*
 - *-way, -ways*
 - *-wise*

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA infolex

9 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

View(s) of English word-formation in dictionaries

- Many dictionaries include affixes and other word-forming elements as headwords
- Role of historical information is important in many synchronic dictionaries
- 'Combining form' terminology introduced by the OED
- Data discussed:
 - 16 word-forming elements in 8 dictionaries

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA infolex

10 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Word-forming elements under consideration

bio-	-ish
cardio-	-less
eco-	-like
ecto-	-logy
-ectomy	-ly
-er	mini-
fore-	-ware
-ful	-wise

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA infolex

11 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Word-forming elements under consideration

Affixes

-er, -ful, -ish, -ly

Neoclassical combining forms

bio-, cardio-, eco-, ecto-, -ectomy, -logy, mini-

Compound-forming elements

fore-, -less, -like, -ware, -wise

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA infolex

12 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Dictionaries studied

- The Century Dictionary (1889-1891)
- Concise Oxford Dictionary (1911)
- American College Dictionary (1946)

Late 20th century – early 21st century

- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11th ed)
- Chambers Dictionary (10th ed)
- American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (5th ed)
- Oxford Dictionary of English (3rd ed)
- Macmillan English Dictionary (on-line)

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA infolex

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

13 Brief comparison of dictionary data

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

	ACD	Chambers	Oxford Dictionary English	AHD5
bio-	X	X	x	x
word-element		combining form	combining form	prefix
cardio-	x	x	x	x
word-element		combining form	combining form	prefix
eco-	NO	x	x	x
		combining form	combining form	prefix
ecto-	x	x	x	x
prefix		combining form	combining form	prefix
*ectomy	x	no	x	x
combining form			combining form	suffix
-er	x (six headwords)	x (2 headwords)	x (6 headwords)	x (2 headwords)
	5 suffixes, 1 termination	2 suffixes	six suffixes	suffix 1 has 2 senses and 6 sub-senses

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

14 The Century Dictionary

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

- Includes as headwords:
bio-, *cardio-*, *ecto-*, *-er*, *fore-*, *-ful*, *-ish*, *-less*, *-ly*
usage note for *wise*
- Does not include as headwords: *eco-*, *-ectomy*, *-like*, *-logy*, *mini-*, *-ware* (*ware* in all examples is an independent word)
- Terminology used:
Prefix, suffix, element in compound words (*bio-*),
element in some words of Greek origin (*cardio-*),
prefix in words of Greek origin (*ecto-*)

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

15 The Century Dictionary

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

- er* five headwords
- fore-* classified as a prefix "much used in compounds"
- ful* suffix in *peaceful*
Pseudo-suffix in *handful*, *armful*
"In these compounds the second element has usually a fuller pronunciation than in the derivatives explained above."
- ish* formative, termination, suffix

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

16 Concise Oxford Dictionary

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

- Includes as headwords:
bio-, *cardio-*, *ecto-*, *-er*, *fore-*, *-ful*, *-ish*, *-less*, *-like*, *-logy*, *-ly*, *-wise*
- Does not include as headwords: *eco-*, *-ectomy*, *mini-*, *-ware* (*ware* in all examples is an independent word)
- Terminology used:
Prefix, suffix, combining form (*bio-*, *cardio-*), in combination (*ecto-*)

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

17 American College Dictionary

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

- Includes as headwords:
bio-, *cardio-*, *ecto-*, *-ectomy*, *-er*, *fore-*, *-ful*, *-ish*, *-less*, *-like*, *-logy*, *-ly*, *-wise*
- Does not include as headwords: *eco-*, *mini-*, *-ware* (*ware* in all examples is an independent word)
- Terminology used:
Prefix, suffix, word-element (*bio-*, *cardio-*), suffixal use of X (*like*, *wise*), combining form (*-logy*), termination (*-er*, *-logy*), in combination (*ecto-*)

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

18 Contemporary dictionaries

(HEL-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
University of Helsinki
March 7-10, 2012

- Chambers Dictionary
 - Does not include: *-ectomy*, *-ful*, *-ly*
 - Prefix, suffix, combining forms
- Oxford Dictionary of English
 - All are headwords
 - Prefix, suffix, combining forms
- Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary
 - Does not include: *-ware*, but in the entry for *ware* [n] it states that it is used in combination
 - Prefix, suffix, n/ad/adv combining form

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA
infolex

19 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Contemporary Dictionaries

- American Heritage Dictionary**
 - All are headwords
 - Prefix, suffix
- Macmillan English Dictionary (learner's)**
 - Does not include: *ecto-*, *-ectomy*, *-er*, *fore-*, *-ful*, *-logy*
 - Prefix, suffix

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA

infolex

20 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Who does the best job? Oxford Dictionary of English

-ful

► **suffix**

- (forming adjectives from nouns) full of: *sorrowful*. ■ having the qualities of: *masterful*.
- forming adjectives from adjectives or from Latin stems with little change of sense: *grateful*.
- (forming adjectives from verbs) apt to; able to; accustomed to: *forgetful* | *watchful*.
- (*pl.* **-fuls**) forming nouns denoting the amount needed to fill the specified container, holder, etc.: *bucketful* | *handful*.

- ORIGIN from [full1](#).

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA

infolex

21 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Not such a good job American Heritage Dictionary

-ful suff.

- Full of: *playful*.
 - Characterized by; resembling: *masterful*.
 - Tending, given, or able to: *useful*.
- A quantity that fills: *armful*.

ETYMOLOGY:
Middle English, from Old English, from *full*, *full*; see *full1*

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA

infolex

22 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Dictionaries and word-forming elements

- Currently:
 - Increased presence of grammar in general language dictionaries
 - Increased power of dictionaries designed for digital consultation
- Should there be more information about the internal structure of words and other types of lexical units?
 - Word-forming elements have both semantic and grammatical information, and dictionaries do not represent most grammatical information well

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA

infolex

23 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Room for improvement

- Dictionaries need to indicate what an affix attaches to
 - Currently, only Oxford Dictionary of English does this systematically
- Dictionaries need to indicate the word class of the resulting form
 - Oxford Dictionary of English, Merriam-Webster do this systematically
- Dictionaries need to indicate something about current productivity
- Chambers has a quite different "nesting" policy

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA

infolex

24 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

Concluding thoughts

Most modern grammars do not include "combining forms" as part of morphological analysis, although "combining forms" are found in several current dictionaries

Some dictionaries use a broad interpretation of prefix and suffix

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

iuila INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA


infolex


25 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HE-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

Concluding thoughts

- Corpus lexicography
 - Will it have any effect on the way word-formation is represented in dictionaries?
- Influence of learner's dictionaries and the "functional" approach to lexicography
 - Will fewer affixes be included in future general language dictionaries?
- Dictionaries designed for electronic consultation

 INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA



26 Affixes and Combining Forms in English Dictionaries -- J. DeCesaris

(HE-LEX 3)
New Approaches in English Historical Lexis Symposium
March 7-10, 2012
University of Helsinki

Thank you for your attention

janet.decesaris@upf.edu

Work supported by project FFI2009-07588
Agrupación semántica y relaciones lexicológicas en el diccionario

 INSTITUT UNIVERSITARI DE LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA