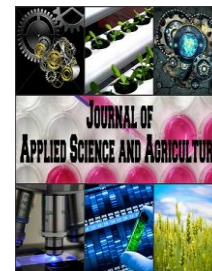




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A Study about the Inflection in English

Sara Sohrabi

Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah branch, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Background: In this research we speak about the inflection in English and according to the properties of inflection and derivation, we elicited and described the inflectional affixes in English. According to these properties the inflectional affixes in English were divided to the three groups: 1- inflectional affixes of the nouns : plural(-s) and possessive (-'s). 2- the inflectional affixes of the verb: (-s) in the simple present tense for third person singular , (-ing) for present participle and gerund , (-ed)in the pat tense and (-en) in the past participle.3-inflectional affixes of adjectives: (-er) in comparative form of the adjective and (- est) in superlative form of the adjective. In this research we followed the continuum approach, that said inflection and derivation are continuum, each affix that has more inflectional properties is closer to the inflectional part of the continuum and each of them has more derivational properties is closer to the derivational part of continuum. Our statistical society in this research are 50 native English speakers who live in Iran. They were selected through the Simple Random. After that information were analyzed through the Descriptive method. A the result we found that according to the properties of the inflection and derivation, this affixes have the most inflectional properties in English .therefore, we can say that English has 8 inflectional affixes that all of them are suffixes.

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INTRODUCTION

As we know according to the traditional classification, morphology was divided to inflection and word-formation. In inflection part, we have the affixes that they don't make the new words and they related to the syntax of the sentences. Also in word-formation there are different parts that the most important of them are derivation and compounding. In derivation such as inflection we use affixes but the main difference between them is that the derivational affixes change the part of speech and create the new words but the inflectional affixes don't it. This is the general and simple description

That we can see in the elementary books about the morphological system of languages. But the morphological system of languages have some complexities that damage the above description. For instance, we have the elitices in languages. Also in some cases, distinguishing between the inflectional and derivational affixes not very easy. For finding the features of inflection and derivation, it's better that we pay attention to the properties that will describe.

The hypothesis of this study is: distinguishing the inflectional and derivational affixes in English according to the 12 criterions is clear and English has 8 inflectional affixes.

Methodology:

This is an applied research , and the descriptive method was employed for it. In this research the statistical society include 670 English native speakers who live in Iran that according to the below formula between them 50 person was selected by Simple Random Method.

$$Z^2(N \times \alpha)(\alpha)$$

$$n = \frac{Z^2(N \times \alpha)(\alpha)}{(d^2)(N) + (Z)^2(d^2)}$$

After selecting, the questioner interviewed these people and asked them to speak about their diary life. During the interview, their voice was recorded. Then we separated the inflectional affixes that they use in their speech and examine them by the properties that we have for the inflectional and derivational affixes and analyzing information through the descriptive method.

Discussion:

Properties of the inflection and derivation:

Linguists according to their views introduce some properties that can be used to distinguish the

inflection and derivation, some of them are all-or-nothing properties and some of them are relative properties. Linguists at least give 12 properties that we show them in blow table:

Table 1:

Inflectional properties	Derivational properties
1-relevant to the syntax	1-not relevant to the syntax
2-obligatory	2-optional
3-not replaced by simple word	3-replaced by simple word
4-same concept as base	4-new concept
5-relatively abstract meaning	5-relatively concrete meaning
6-semantically regular	6-possibly semantically regular
7-less relevant to base meaning	7-very relevant to the base meaning
8-unlimited applicability	8-limited applicability
9-expression at word periphery	9-expression close to the base
10-less base allomorphic	10-more base allomorphy
11-cumulative expression possible	11-no cumulative expression
12-not iterable	12-iterable

As we know, all of these properties for all of the inflectional affixes aren't true. Despite morphologists' discussion since the 1980s, no consensus has been reached, and the two major views are quite incompatible: the dichotomy approach (which regards inflection and derivation as two disjoint class) and the continuum approach (which sees the different patterns on a scale between minimally and maximally inflectional/derivational)

Finally, there is a less well-know intermediate position, which assume a tripartition of the domain. (haspelmath 2002:77)

In this article, we follow the continuum approach. According to this approach, having all of the 12 properties not necessary for inflectional affixes. On the other hand, the distinction of derivation and inflection is a matter of degree and it's not an all-or-nothing phenomenon.

Inflectional affixes in "English":

The inflectional affixes of nouns:

In English the inflectional affixes of nouns are only the suffixes that include :plural (-s) and possessive (-'s). Now we examine the 12 criterions for each of them

Plural (-s):

(-s) in English was used to show the plural nouns. for example, in this sentence "my friends study in an art academy". In this sentence ,friend + -s → friends

Now we examine this prefix by the 12 current tests that are usually used to distinguish inflectional and derivational affixes:

1-(-s), due to the agreement of verb with subject in person is relevant to the syntax. In this example "the boys play football in the yard" if we use "boy" instead of "boys" the sentence is ungrammatical.

2-second properties is the same of the first one, and (-s) in English has the grammatical meaning. Due to it, using the (-s) in sentences is obligatory.

3- most time we can't replace the plural form with the simple form, because in this case the sentences become ungrammatical. But nominal plurals can be replaced by singulars when nothing agrees with them. e.g. *the boys walked to home*. if *boy* is used instead of *boys* also, sentence is true.

4-when we add (-s) to a noun, the new word has the same concept as the root. for example, door + -s → doors.

5-the 5th property is not true for this suffix and it doesn't express the abstract meaning.

6-this suffix such as another inflectional suffixes is semantically regular and when (-s) was used with a word we can predict that it express the plural meaning.

7-the meaning of this suffix is less relevant to the meaning of base.

8-we can use (-s) without arbitrary limitation with most bases in English except irregular plural forms.

9-(-s) is expressed at periphery of words. For example, work + -er → worker + -s → workers.

10-(-s) rarely includes base allomorphic .

11- this property is not true for (-s), because (-s) doesn't express cumulatively.

12-(-s) can't be iterated. For example, we never see the words such as (boxeses) or (girlss) in English

As we say, in this study we follow the continuum approach, according to this (-s) has most of the criterions, because of that we can say that it's a inflectional affix.

In possessive form:

When we want to show that something belongs to somebody or something, we usually add 's to a singular noun and an apostrophe ' to a plural noun, for example: "marry 's father is worker" or " the boys' ball is blue"

Now we test (-'s) by the 12 properties that are usually used to distinguish inflectional and derivational affixes:

1-this suffix is relevant to the syntax of the sentences . For example, "jack's grandfather is a rich man"

here if we use “jack” in place of “jack’s” it become ungrammatical sentence and doesn’t show the possessive form.

2-because (-’s)has the grammatical meaning and express the possessive forms, using it is obligatory.

3-we can’t substitute the simple form of the word instead of the possessive form. for instance ,if in this sentence “katty’s friends came to her party” if we use “katty” instead of “katty’s” it becomes a ungrammatical sentence and we can’t see the possessive form in this sentence.

4-when (-’s)is added to a noun, the new word has the same concept as its base .for example, girl + -’s → girl’s

5- the 5th criterion in some case for (-’s) is true and using it with some bases expresses the abstract meaning,

6-(-’s)has the predictable and regular meaning. Using it with all words express the possessive meaning.

7-the meaning of(-’s)is less relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we can use (-’s)without arbitrary limitation with all singular nouns.

9- (-’s)is placed at the periphery of words. As we see in this case,” teach+er →teacher + -’s → teacher’s” or “manage + -ment → management + -’s→ management’s

10-(-’s) never includes base allomorphic.

11-(-’s) doesn’t express cumulatively, it only express the possessive form in the words. due to it, this criterion isn’t true for (-’s)

12-(-’s) can’t be iterated. For example, never we see “boy’s’s cars” or “marry’s’s mother” in English

Consequently, we can say that (-’s) is the inflectional suffix in English.

The inflectional affixes of verbs:

In English the inflectional affixes of verb such as noun are only the suffixes that contain: (-s) in the simple present tense for third person singular, (-ing) for present participle and gerund,(- ed)in the past tense and (-en) in the past participle.

In the simple present tense for third person singular:

The third person singular is most often expressed by words such as he, she and it. But, in fact, any person, place, or thing in the singular form (for example house, dog or car) other than the speaker and the addressee is referred to in the third person singular.

The basic rule of conjugating the third person singular is adding -s to the base form of a verb.

Now we examine this prefix by the 12properties:

1-due to the grammatical rules, this suffix is relevant to the syntax and according to the syntactic structure of sentences we have to use it.

2-because (-s) express the grammatical function ‘third person singular in simple present tense’ ,the syntactic structure of sentence oblige us to use it.

3-we can’t replace the simple form of the verb , instead of the form that was make by the (-s).for instance, in this sentence “marry studies her lesson in the morning” if we use “study” instead of “studies” it become ungrammatical.

4-when (-s)is added to a verb the new form has the same concept as its base. For instance, write+ -s → writes

5-this suffix has the abstract meaning.

6-(-s)has the predictable and regular meaning .using it with the verbs in simple present tense show the third person singular.

7-the meaning of this suffix is less relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we use (-s) without arbitrary limitation with the verbs in simple past tense when the subject of the sentence is the third person singular.

9-(-s) is placed at the periphery of the verbs. as we see in here:

(real + -ize→ realize+ -s→ realizes)

10-(-s) never includes base allomorphic.

11-11th criterion is true for this suffix and it express cumulatively because when we add(-s)to a verb it shows that the subject of the verb is the third person singular in the simple present tense.

12-(-s) can’t be iterated. For example, we can’t see (goeses) or (walkss).

Finally, we can say that (-s) is one of the inflectional affixes in English.

(-ing):

(-ing) in English was used to form the gerund and present participle. Gerund is a word that function as a noun .it is make by adding (-ing) top the end of the verb for example: (walking is useful for your health). Present participle is used with a verb “to be” to create the progressive forms that show continuing action. the present participle is formed by adding (-ing) to the verb, for example:(marry is writing a letter).also, sometime it can be used as an adjective, for instance: (it was interesting film).

Now this prefix was tested by the 12 properties to show that it’s the inflectional suffix:

1-(-ing) is relevant to the syntax. If we don’t use it in the place of the gerund and present participle sentences become ungrammatical . For example in this example(jack is going to school.) (-ing) show the progressive present ,now if we omit (-ing) the sentence become ungrammatical.

2- because (-ing) express the grammatical function, syntactic structure of sentence oblige us to use it.

3-we can’t use the simple form of verb instead of the form that we use by (-ing) because it express the grammatical function ,if substitute the simple form, the sentence become ungrammatical .

4-adding(-ing) to the verb don’t create the different concept as its base.

5-(-ing) express the abstract meaning, because of it linguists say that it has the different usages in English.

6-(-ing) has the predictable and regular meaning. we know that, using it in sentences is to show the gerund or present participle.

7-the meaning of (-ing) is less relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we can use (-ing) without arbitrary limitation with most verbs.

9-(-ing) is placed at the periphery of verbs. for example,(nature -al→ natural+ -ize→ naturalize+ -ing→ naturalizing (n) (adj)

(v) (progressive)

10-(-ing) doesn't includes base allomorphic.

11(-ing) expresses cumulatively, because in English it was use to show the gerund and present participle.

12(-ing) can't be iterated. For instance never we see (walkinging) or (readinging).

Now, we can say that (-ing) is inflectional affix in English.

(-ed) in past tense:

Generally the simple past tense refers to the events, habitual action and state in past(Palmer and Greenbum,1992:25)

The past tense includes any action or state of being that we could find between the dawn of time and split second before the present(Strampf and Douglas,2004).simple past tense in English was formed by adding (-ed) to the regular verbs.

Here (-ed) is examined by the 12 criterions to present that it's the inflectional affix in English:

1-(-ed) is relevant to the syntax. If we don't use it in the simple past tense for regular verbs and another forms was used in place of it the sentences don't express the past tense and they become ungrammatical . e.g, in this sentence (jack walked to university last morning.) if we use (-ing)instead of (-ed) by the verb, it become ungrammatical.

2- because (-ed) has the grammatical meaning, the syntactic structure of sentences oblige us to use it.

3-we can't use the simple form of word instead of the form that we use by (-ed) because it is used to present the past tense, if substitute the simple form, the sentences don't express the simple past tense.

4-adding(-ed) to the verb create the same concept as its base.

5-(-ed)relatively express the abstract meaning.

6-(-ed) has the predictable and regular meaning. we assume that, using it in sentences show the past tense.

7-the meaning of (-ed) is less relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we use (-ed) with arbitrary limitation and only with regular verbs.

9-(-ed) is placed at the periphery of verbs. for example,(nature -al→ natural+ -ize→ naturalize+ -ed→ naturalized (n) (adj)

(v)

10-(-ed) doesn't includes base allomorphic.

11(-ed) expresses cumulatively and using it with verb sometimes show the simple past tense and sometimes using(-ed)form as an adjective.

12(-ed) can't be iterated. For instance never we see (watcheded) or (walkeded).

Now, we can say that (-ed) is one of the inflectional affix in English.

(-en) in past participle:

The (-en) form my function either as a verb to express the perfect aspect or the passive voice or as an adjective.

The distinction between adjectival and verbal use is not always clear. an attributively used (-en) form of an intransitive verb may be analyzed as verbal and active.(Chalker and Weiner,1994).

In this time we test (-en) with the 12 properties to make sure that it's an inflectional affix:

1-(-en) is relevant to the syntax. If we don't use it in the place of the adjective or in the perfect aspect or passive voice the sentences become ungrammatical. For example in this example(the letter was written.) (-en) show the passive voice ,now if we omit (-en) the sentence become ungrammatical.

2- because (-en) express the grammatical function ,we were obliged to use it by the syntactic structure of the sentences.

3-we can't use the simple form of the verbs instead of the form that was formed by (-en).

4-adding(-en) to the verb don't create the different concept as its base.

5-(-en) express the abstract meaning, because of it linguists agree that it has the different usages in English.

6-(-en) has the predictable and regular meaning. we know that, using it in sentences is to express the perfect aspect, passive voice or as an adjective.

7-the meaning of (-en) is not relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we have arbitrary limitation to use (-en) and only it was used by some verbs.

9-(-en) is placed at the periphery of verbs.

10-(-en) doesn't includes base allomorphic.

11(-en) expresses cumulatively, because in English it was use to express the perfect aspect, passive voice and sometime as an adjective.

12(-en) can't be iterated. For instance never we see (eatenen) or (writenen).

Here, we can conclude that (-en) is an inflectional affix in English.

Inflectional affixes of adjective:

English short adjectives (one and in some case two-syllable if it ends with -y, -er and -le) are inflected to mark comparative and superlative forms .the comparative form of an adjective is used for comparing two people or things. many short adjectives in English use the suffix(-er) when use as a comparative, while the superlative form is used for comparing one person or thing with every other

member of their group and the suffix (-est) was used to form the superlative adjective. here we examine these two suffixes with the 12 properties that are used for distinguishing the inflectional affixes from derivational affixes.

(-er) in comparative forms:

1-due to the grammatical rules, this suffix is relevant to the syntax and according to the syntactic structure of sentences we have to use it.

2-using (-er) to form the comparative form of adjective is necessary, and we were obliged to use it by syntactic structure of sentences.

3-we can't replace the simple form of the adjective, instead of the form that was formed by (-er).for instance, in this sentence "marry is taller than her sister" if we use "tall" instead of "taller" it become ungrammatical.

4-when (-er)is added to an adjective the new form has the same concept as its base. For instance, big+ -er → bigger

5-this property isn't true for this suffix, and it doesn't express the abstract meaning.

6-(-er)has the predictable and regular meaning .using it with the adjectives express the comparison between two things.

7-the meaning of this suffix is less relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we have some arbitrary limitation to use this suffix and only (-er) is used by the one-syllable and some two-syllable adjectives.

9-(-er) is placed at the periphery of the adjective. e.g, (easy + -er→ easier)

10-(-er) never includes base allomorphic.

11-11th criterion isn't true for this suffix and it doesn't express cumulatively because we use (-er) by adjectives only to show the comparative forms.

12-(-er) can't be iterated. For example, we can't see (easierer) or (tallerer)or (happierer)

According to this reason we see that (-er)in comparative forms of adjective is one of the inflectional suffixes in English.

(est)in superlative forms:

1-according to the grammatical rules, using(-er)in comparative form is relevant to the syntax and because of the syntactic structure of sentences we have to use it.

2-using (-est) for making the superlative form of adjective is necessary, and we were obliged to use it by the syntactic structure of sentences.

3-we can't replace the simple form of the adjective, instead of the form that was formed by (-est).for instance, in this sentence "jack is the fattest boy in the class" if we use "fat" instead of "fattest" it become ungrammatical.

4-while (-est)is added to an adjective the new form has the same concept as its base. For instance, tall+ -est → tallest

5-this property isn't true for (-est), and this suffix express the concrete meaning.

6-(-est)semantically is regular ,and using it with the adjectives express the comparison between one thing with every other member of the group.

7-the meaning of (-est) is less relevant to the meaning of its base.

8-we have some arbitrary limitation to use (-est) and only it is used by the one-syllable and some two-syllable adjectives.

9-(-est) is placed at the periphery of the adjective. e.g, (happy+ -est→ happiest)

10-(-est) never includes base allomorphic.

11-11th criterion isn't true for (-est) and it doesn't express cumulatively because we use this suffix only to show the superlative form of adjective.

12-(-est) can't be iterated. For example, we can't see (tallestest) or (biggestest)

by this examination we can see that (-est) is inflectional suffix.

Research finding:

According to this study, after collecting the data which was obtained from statistical society and analyzing them, researcher found that there are 8 inflectional affixes in English that all of them are suffixes. Because researcher in this study followed the continuum approach, among these suffixes,(-ing) and (-s)in third person singular have the most inflectional properties and they are the most inflectional affixes in English.

Conclusion:

As a result of this research we can found that studying about the morphology and inflection in English can help teacher who teach English as foreign language and by using this information they can improve their method of teaching. also it helps to create the new books for native English speakers who study in another country.

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