

*Melnikova T.V.,**Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages
Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4215-1486>*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING AFFIXES IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ENGLISH: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Summary. The article examines the significance of understanding suffixes and prefixes in the process of learning English as a foreign language. Affixation is considered not only as a morphological mechanism of word formation, but also as an important cognitive-didactic tool that contributes to a deeper understanding of the language system. It is emphasized that knowledge of affixes allows students to independently determine the meaning of new words, recognize their grammatical affiliation, logically connect lexemes with each other and expand their vocabulary without constant recourse to translation. The main theoretical approaches to the concept of affixation, its typology, historical origins and evolution in the English language are analyzed. Special attention is paid to the issues of the productivity of suffixes and prefixes, their semantic and structural functions, as well as the relationship between the morphological and semantic sides of the word. The article considers ways of practical use of knowledge about affixes in the process of forming communicative, lexical and grammatical competences. It is shown that the systematic study of the morpheme structure of a word contributes to increasing the level of linguistic consciousness, developing analytical thinking and forming skills for independent work with texts of various genres. Examples of the most common affixes of modern English are presented, their main models of word formation are identified and the patterns of their functioning are described. A comparative analysis of the English and Ukrainian affixation systems is conducted, which allows to identify common and distinctive features in the creation of new words and grammatical forms. It is emphasized that affixation is not only a structural component of language but also an effective didactic tool in teaching English, which increases students' motivation and ensures conscious assimilation of lexical and grammatical material. The results obtained confirm the feasibility of integrating morphological analysis into modern methods of teaching foreign languages, because it is precisely the understanding of word structure that helps to form a systemic vision of language processes and increases the effectiveness of learning.

Key words: affixes, prefixes, suffixes, affixation, word formation, English language, morphology, linguodidactics, cognitive strategies.

Problem statement. Modern linguistics and foreign language teaching methods attach great importance to the morphological structure of words, because it is precisely understanding the structure of a word that allows you to more effectively master the vocabulary, grammar, and semantics of the language. One of the key aspects of morphology is the study of affixes, which are

prefixes and suffixes that form new words and alter their meaning. Understanding the affix system of the English language not only helps to enrich the vocabulary, but also assists in forming linguistic intuition, which is a necessary element of mastering a foreign language. Modern linguistics actively studies the structure of a word as the basic unit of language. Understanding the morpheme structure of words is a crucial component in mastering a foreign language successfully. Affixation, that is, the addition of prefixes and suffixes, is an important means of word formation that contributes to the formation of new words, changing their grammatical properties and semantic shades. One of the key aspects of language acquisition is understanding word-forming processes, particularly affixation – the formation of new words using prefixes and suffixes. In the process of learning English, knowledge of affixes helps students not only remember words, but also understand the patterns of the language system. [1; 2].

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recent studies show that targeted training in morphological awareness (including prefixes and suffixes) effectively improves vocabulary and spelling competence, reading and translation skills, with effects observed on both learned and (to some extent) unlearned words; there is also growing interest in the neurobiological mechanisms of morphological processing. The formation of morphological awareness (MA) as a component of lexical and reading competence, the ability to recognize affixes, understand their meaning, and use them productively, directly correlates with improvements in vocabulary, reading and spelling skills [3]. For example, Lin investigated the “teachability of affixes” and the positive effects of affix instruction [4]. The trend is that affixes are no longer considered simply as “additional” material – they are becoming a central element of lexical learning. The trend of recognizing the role of prefixes and suffixes in learning as tools for deducing meanings and word formation is realized in the fact that in educational interventions the emphasis is placed on affixes as a means of guessing the meaning of new words. That is, modern methods are aimed not only at memorizing words, but also provide tools for analysing morphemes for independent learning. At the current stage, more emphasis is placed on interventions (explicit instruction) with affixes, and on their impact on reading, spelling, and vocabulary. For example, a meta-analysis (Educational Psychology Review) has shown that morphological instruction has a small to medium effect on reading and spelling. However, when it is integrated with other components of literacy, the effect is significantly greater [3]. This means that simply “listing a list of affixes” is not enough – purposeful, structured instruction in

their understanding and application is needed. Considerable attention is now being paid to corpus and empirical studies of the productivity of affixes and the frequency of their use. Studies have focused on which affixes are most frequently used, how often they can be trained, and their productivity [5]. One conclusion is that instruction should focus on semantically transparent affixes with high frequency of use [6]. In addition, there is currently an active inclusion of affix instruction in EFL/ESL contexts. Studies from Israel, Indonesia, China, etc. have shown that students learning English as an L2/EFL benefit immensely from instruction with affixes [7].

The purpose of the article is to identify and generalize the theoretical and practical aspects of the role of suffixes and prefixes in the process of learning the English language. The study is aimed at finding out how knowledge of affixation contributes to expanding vocabulary, developing grammatical competence, improving reading, translation and pronunciation skills, as well as forming a systematic approach to mastering the morphological structure of the English language.

Objectives of the article. To achieve the purpose, the following main tasks are defined in the work:

1. To analyse the theoretical foundations of affixation as a language process, to clarify its essence, types and functions in the English language.
2. To highlight the historical development of affixation in the English language and to trace the influence of Latin, French and Germanic sources on the formation of the modern affix system.
3. To classify the main types of affixes (prefixes and suffixes) and determine their productivity and functional features.
4. To carry out a comparative analysis of English and Ukrainian affixal systems in order to identify common and distinctive features in word-forming processes.
5. To substantiate the practical importance of affixation in teaching English, in particular its role in the development of students' lexical, grammatical and communicative competences.
6. To show the role of affixes in expanding vocabulary and forming students' morphological awareness.
7. To analyse the possibilities of using affixes in teaching English, in particular through didactic strategies, exercises and the use of morphological tables.
8. To investigate the frequency of use of affixes in modern English according to corpus research data (COCA, BNC).
9. To formulate conclusions regarding the importance of affixation as a tool for effective acquisition of English and the development of analytical thinking in the learning process.

Presentation of the main material. In linguistics, affixation is defined as one of the methods of morphological word formation, which involves attaching additional morphemes to the root, typically in the form of prefixes or suffixes. Prefixes are located before the root and mostly change the meaning of the word, and suffixes are placed after the root, often changing the part of speech. In English, prefixes, as a rule, do not change the part of speech, but modify the meaning of the word, while suffixes can transform a verb into a noun, adjective or adverb. For example: teach → teacher, quick → quickly. [8]. Affixation is the process of attaching morphemes to the stem of a word in order to form new lexical units [8]. In modern English, as in other analytical languages, affixation is the main mechanism of word formation, which allows you to create productive models for the formation of new terms and concepts. The process of affixation in English has a long history, which dates back

to the Old English period. With changes in the phonetic and morphological systems of the language, the modern type of affix system gradually formed. Many modern prefixes are of Latin or Greek origin (e.g., pre-, re-, sub-), while some suffixes are of Germanic origin (-hood, -ship). This indicates the integration of the English language into the global linguistic context. [2]. The history of English affixation can be traced to the Old English period, when most affixes were of Germanic origin. Subsequently, under the influence of French and Latin, the affix system is significantly enriched, especially in the field of scientific and literary vocabulary [9]. For example, the suffixes -tion, -ment, -ity come from Latin, while the prefixes un-, mis-, over- have Germanic roots.

Prefixes can be classified according to semantic function: negative (un-, in-, dis-), spatial (sub-, inter-, trans-), temporal (pre-, post-), intensive (super-, over-). Suffixes are divided into word-forming (-ness, -ity, -ment) and variable (-ed, -ing, -s). Each type plays its role in building a language structure. Understanding these types helps to systematize vocabulary and develop grammatical intuition.

Affixes are divided into derivational (word-forming) and inflectional (form-forming). Derivational affixes create new words, for example: happy → happiness, legal → illegal. Inflectional affixes change the grammatical forms of a word: work → worked, cat → cats. As Plag notes, the productivity of derivational affixes is determined by the frequency of their use and the ability to join new bases [2].

Many suffixes have the function of denoting parts of speech. Thus, the suffixes -er and -or form nouns that denote persons by type of activity (teacher, actor). The suffix -ness forms abstract nouns from adjectives (kind → kindness), and the suffix -ly forms adverbs (quick → quickly). Knowledge of these patterns helps students recognize the grammatical structure of sentences, recognize the syntactic functions of words, and build grammatically correct sentences. [8].

Knowledge of prefixes and suffixes greatly facilitates the process of memorizing new words. Even without knowing a particular word, a student can intuitively determine its meaning by analysing familiar morphemes. For example: unhappy = un- (not) + happy (happy) → 'unhappy'; careless = care (care) + -less (without) → 'indifferent'. This approach promotes student autonomy and increases their confidence in working with new vocabulary. Such examples demonstrate that affixation is an effective cognitive mechanism in the acquisition of vocabulary. [10]. Affixation helps to form hundreds of derived words from a single root. For example, the word act is used to form actor, action, active, react, interaction. As Bauer notes, such a systematic approach enables students to see the relationships between words, thereby developing logical thinking. When reading foreign language texts, knowledge of a word's morphemic structure allows you to predict the meaning of unfamiliar words without needing a dictionary. For example: pre-view = pre- (before) + view (to watch) → 'to preview'; re-write = re- (again) + write (to write) → 'to rewrite'. This develops contextual thinking skills and contributes to a more natural understanding of English texts [1].

Mastering the rules for adding suffixes helps to avoid spelling errors and improves pronunciation. For example, when adding the suffix -ion to the verb "decide," the resulting form and stress change. Thus, knowledge of affixes contributes to a more accurate reproduction of the sound and graphic form of the word.

Data from English corpora (COCA, BNC) indicate that the most common suffixes are -tion, -ness, -ly, and prefixes are

un-, re-, in-. This confirms their productivity in word formation in modern English. Corpus analysis allows teachers to determine the most frequent affixes for effective teaching [11]. English teachers can use affixes as a tool for active learning. It is advisable to introduce exercises on recognizing, constructing and translating words with certain prefixes and suffixes. Such tasks form morphological competence in students and contribute to long-term memorization. In the educational process, it is important to use communicatively oriented exercises aimed at mastering affixes: morpheme analysis, word creation, comparison of 'word – derived word' pairs. The teacher can introduce affixes gradually, grouping them by meaning and frequency of use. This approach increases students' motivation and develops systemic thinking. In pedagogical practice, the study of affixes can be integrated into all stages of learning. The use of affix tables, morphological maps, and exercises for recognizing morphemes helps to develop students' morphological consciousness.

From the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, understanding the morpheme structure of a word develops logical and systemic thinking. Language ceases to be perceived as a set of discrete units, and appears as an interconnected system. This increases the effectiveness of learning and forms the student's ability to analytically perceive linguistic phenomena. Psycholinguistic studies show that the analysis of morpheme structure contributes to the activation of cognitive processes, in particular memory and thinking. Students who study affixes develop the ability to be flexible in language and predict the meanings of unfamiliar words in context. [12].

Understanding prefixes and suffixes has direct practical significance, as it aids in writing academic texts, reading literature, and taking tests (for example, the TOEFL or IELTS). Students who master the affixal system tend to achieve higher results in the perception, translation, and production of texts. Knowledge of affixes greatly simplifies the process of learning the English language. As proven by Nation's research [11], students who master the basic word-formation models learn new vocabulary more easily. For example, knowing the meaning of the prefix re- ("again") or the suffix -less ("without"), one can guess the meaning of a word without a dictionary. Empirical analysis has shown that students who actively use the method of morphemic analysis when learning new words increase their active vocabulary by an average of 25%. This confirms the effectiveness of working with affixes as a tool for increasing lexical competence. [11].

In Ukrainian, affixation is also the main way of word formation, but the English system has a more limited paradigm of variable affixes. This is explained by the analytical nature of the English language. However, the similarity in the use of negative prefixes (un- / не-, dis- / без-) makes it possible to conduct effective comparative exercises. [1].

A comparison of the English and Ukrainian affixation systems reveals both common and distinctive features. In Ukrainian, affixes are more variable due to their inflectional nature, while English demonstrates an analytical tendency. However, the functional role of affixes in forming new meanings remains similar – in both languages, they provide an economy of linguistic means and a logical structure of speech (13).

Further research into the role of affixes in the process of learning English can focus on creating electronic educational resources that contain interactive exercises in morpheme analysis. Another

promising area is computational linguistics, where affixes are used for automatic word recognition.

Conclusions. Awareness of the functionality of prefixes and suffixes is an important element in learning English. This knowledge contributes to expanding vocabulary, forming grammatical competence, improving spelling skills and developing analytical thinking. A systematic study of affixes enables students to master the language more effectively, and teachers to employ innovative approaches in the educational process. Thus, affixes are not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a powerful tool of pedagogical influence. Understanding prefixes and suffixes is a crucial component of effective English learning and contributes to the development of a systematic approach to language. Affixes not only change the structure of the word, but also reveal the patterns of language, which helps students become more independent in learning, more confidently understand new words without a dictionary and memorize them faster, precisely through understanding their construction. Thus, affixation is not only a morphological phenomenon, but also an effective pedagogical tool in teaching English.

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Мельнікова Т. Важливість розуміння афіксів у процесі вивчення англійської мови: теоретичні та практичні аспекти

Анотація. У статті досліджується роль і значення розуміння суфіксів і префіксів у процесі вивчення англійської мови як іноземної. Афіксація розглядається не лише як морфологічний механізм словотворення, а й як важливий когнітивно-дидактичний інструмент, що сприяє глибшому осмисленню мовної системи. Автор акцентує увагу на тому, що знання афіксів дає можливість здобувачам освіти самостійно визначати значення нових слів, розпізнавати їхню граматичну належність, логічно пов'язувати лексеми між собою та розширювати словниковий запас без постійного звернення до перекладу. Проаналізовано основні теоретичні підходи до поняття афіксації, її типологію, історичні витоки та еволюцію в англійській мові. Окрему увагу приділено питанням продуктивності суфіксів і префіксів, їхнім семантичним і структурним функціям, а також взаємозв'язку між морфологічною та семантичною сторонами слова.

У статті розглядаються шляхи практичного використання знань про афікси у процесі формування комунікативної, лексичної та граматичної компетенцій. Показано, що системне опрацювання морфемної будови слова сприяє підвищенню рівня мовної свідомості, розвитку аналітичного мислення та формуванню навичок самостійної

роботи з текстами різних жанрів. Представлено приклади найпоширеніших афіксів сучасної англійської мови, визначено їхні основні моделі словотворення та описано закономірності їх функціонування. Проведено порівняльний аналіз англійської та української систем афіксації, який дозволяє простежити спільні та відмінні риси у шляхах творення нових слів і граматичних форм.

Наголошується, що афіксація є не лише структурною складовою мови, а й ефективним дидактичним засобом у навчанні англійської, який підвищує мотивацію студентів і забезпечує свідоме засвоєння лексико-граматичного матеріалу. Отримані результати підтверджують доцільність інтеграції морфологічного аналізу у сучасні методики викладання іноземних мов, адже саме розуміння будови слова допомагає сформувати системне бачення мовних процесів і підвищує ефективність навчання.

Ключові слова: афікси, префікси, суфікси, афіксація, словотворення, англійська мова, морфологія, лінгводидактика, когнітивні стратегії.

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